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THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

VOL. XVII

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GOETHE'S INTEREST IN MUSIC¹

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

GOETHE'S attitude towards music has not hitherto received the attention it deserves. The man of letters who is also a musician is a rarity. When men of this type are found, their taste in music is usually amateurish, so that it has been supposed that Goethe was cut to the same inadequate measure. Even at best, Goethe was not considered more than an amateur, distinguished, refined, and sensitive, but without any technical knowledge, a man who judged musical works according to the impressions they made upon him—impressions at times vivid and penetrating, but largely instinctive and often affected by the prevailing fashion of the day. His failure to understand Beethoven was thus set down to his incompetence in an art which was altogether alien to him.

But when we take the trouble to follow Goethe's artistic life from beginning to end, we find that we must abandon this view. From first to last we are struck by the great part which music played in it.²

¹From "Goethe and Beethoven" by Romain Rolland, to be published by Harper & Brothers.

²The standard work on this subject is that mine of information, *Die Tonkunst in Goethe's Leben* (*Music in Goethe's Life*), 2 vols., by Wilhelm Bode, Berlin, 1912, completed by the same author's other work *Goethe's Schauspieler und Musiker* (*Goethe's Actors and Musicians*), 1 vol., Berlin, 1912.

There is nothing in Goethe's life which Bode does not know, but Bode is not a musician. The same subject, however, has been treated from the musician's point of view by Hermann Abert, an eminent writer on music, in his excellent work, *Goethe und die Musik* (J. Engelhorn's Nachf., Stuttgart, 1922). The principal feature of this little book is the reconstruction of the musical atmosphere in which Goethe lived; the author shows clearly to what extent Goethe agreed with the ideas of the time on music in general and on the different forms of music, *Lied*, opera, and instrumental music, and in what way his art reacted upon the music of his time, and *vice versa*.

I must also mention the writings on this subject by Wasielewski, Spitta, and Max Friedlaender.

Although, as everyone knows, he was above all a "visual,"

Zum Sehen geboren,

Zum Schauen bestellt . . .

(Born to see, destined to observe . . .), and to him the finest music was that which his great eyes conveyed to him—it was he who said so strikingly, "compared with the eye, the ear is a dumb sense" (*gegen das Auge betrachtet, ist das Ohr ein stummer Sinn*)—nevertheless, there was no dumb sense in Goethe: every pore, as it were, was open to the beauty of the world, and we can almost say that in his case the ear was a second eye.

As I have already said, his ear was most sensitive. He could not tolerate din; street noises were a torture to him; his aversion to dogs was partly caused by their barking; he fled the blare of the romantic orchestra; at the theatre the kettle-drums hurt him: he would leave his box in the middle of a performance. We must always bear in mind the extreme sensitiveness of his nerves, those delicate organisms which dominated his mind. His recognition of this heel of Achilles (for he knew all his weaknesses) was largely responsible for his isolation at Weimar and his fear of large cities.

But let us make no mistake. It was noise which he hated. The fulness of rich, pure sound delighted him. He himself spoke in no twilight tones. He had a fine and powerful bass voice, and liked to hear it. Even at the age of seventy he astounded Mendelssohn by its "tremendous sonority" (*ungeheurer Klang*). That voice, had he wished, could have been "heard above the clash of ten thousand warriors," the young musician wrote to his sister Fanny. And indeed, when Goethe directed rehearsals at the Weimar Theatre, his commands, thundering forth from his box, filled the whole theatre.¹ When he recited he knew how to use all the registers of his voice.

¹The actor Genast, in his memoirs, shows him forbidding the public to laugh at a performance of *Ion* in 1802, and calling to order rowdy students of Jena at a performance of Schiller's *Räuber* (*The Robbers*) in 1808. Here is another amusing anecdote, told by the music historian, Christian Lobe. Lobe was then young, and very much in love with an actress who was playing in *Turandot* at Weimar. He had slipped into a dark corner of the theatre during the rehearsal and tried to watch her from behind a column. But as she was on his side of the stage he could not see her. Lobe came out from his hiding-place, and from seat to seat worked his way to the centre of the stalls. He saw his beloved, she saw him, and the silly young lovers exchanged signs of recognition. Lobe, in his joy, rose, without thinking, from his seat. Suddenly, from the depth of a box, thundered the bass voice of His Excellency von Goethe, "Remove that dirty mongrel from my sight!" (*Schafft mir doch den Schweinehund aus den Augen!*) Lobe fled, jumping over the seats, stumbling, falling, in utter confusion and shame, with the laughter of the actors ringing in his ears. Only long after did he hear that Goethe's vigorous remark was not addressed to him, but to the coach and accompanist, Eilenstein, a drunkard, who was strumming on the piano a fantastic march which had derived its inspiration from the bottle.

He had developed this magnificent organ not only by reading aloud and reciting, but also by singing. As a child he learnt tunes by heart, as all children do, even before he could understand the meaning of the words. In Leipzig he sang affecting duets with the Breilkopf sisters. Never, throughout his life, did he write a *Lied* without humming a melody to it.¹ "Never read, always sing!" (*Nur nicht lesen, immer singen!*) he wrote in a love poem to Lina, in which he recommended that in order to read his poems she should sit at the piano and play. Here we have a trait which essentially distinguishes his art from all our songless poetry. Of music he said that it was the "true element from which all poetry is derived and into which all poetry flows," like rivers into the sea (*von der Tonkunst, dem wahren Elemente, woher alle Dichtungen entspringen, und wohin sie zurückkehren*).

Besides singing, he had learned in Frankfurt to play the piano, and in Strasbourg he had studied the 'cello. We read that in 1795, at the age of forty-six, "he plays the piano, and not at all badly" (*Er spielt Klavier, und gar nicht schlecht*).² There is, however, reason to believe that after he settled in Weimar (towards the end of 1775) he neglected the piano, except on rare occasions when he used Wieland's instrument. No doubt he did not consider it advisable to be heard at a court of music-lovers in which his fair friend, Frau von Stein, played both the piano and the lute. His privileged position also procured him the pleasures of music at no pains of his own: if he wanted to hear it, he had but to send for the musicians under his command.

It is well to remember, however, that music was to him no simple amusement. It was either an intellectual interest for the mind, a means of soothing, calming, and cleaning the spirit, or a

¹Like Beethoven, he composed many of his poems as he walked and sang, and there is good reason why a number of them bear the title of "Wanderer." A significant passage in the *Wanderjahre* ("Years of Wandering") of *Wilhelm Meister* reveals to us the musical character of his creative process:

"It often happens that a hidden genius whispers a rhythm to me, so that, as I wander about, I always move to it, and simultaneously seem to hear faint sounds, the accompaniment of some song which somehow pleasantly suggests itself to me." (*Mir scheint oft ein geheimer Genius etwas Rhythmisches vorzuflüstern, so dass ich mich beim Wandern jedesmal im Takt bewege und zugleich leise Töne zu vernehmen glaube, wodurch denn irgendein Lied begleitet wird, das sich mir auf eine oder die andre Weise gefällig vergegenwärtigt*.) III. 1.

Thus, it is first the rhythm which forms the framework, then the melody which clothes it. Finally there is the poem itself. Abert correctly states that the rhythm is the soul of the inner music from which Goethe's poems have sprung. *Der Takt kommt aus der poetischen Stimmung, wie unbewusst* ("The rhythm is the unconscious outcome of the poetical mood") (To Eckermann, April 6th, 1829).

²Bode, op. cit., II, 345.

source of direct inspiration to creative activity.¹ Thus in 1779 he sent for the musicians "to soothe his soul and set his spirit free" (*die Seele zu lindern und die Geister zu entbinden*), while he was writing *Iphigenie*. Similarly, in 1815-16 he had recourse to music as a help to inspiration while he was writing *Epimenides*. In 1820 he wrote: "I can always work better after I have been listening to music."

That he composed himself there is no doubt; and he even wrote naturally in several parts. Of this the following is a curious example:

During the summer of 1813—the year after he met Beethoven—while he was alone in Bohemia and in a depressed frame of mind, he meditated deeply on the immortal words of desperate hope—*In te, Domine, speravi et non confundar in aeternum*. He set them to music for voices in four parts. The following winter, after reading his composition over, he asked Zelter to set the same words to music also in four parts. His obliging friend obeyed. And Goethe, after comparing the two versions, wrote to Zelter (February 23, 1814) that the comparison had thrown a light on his own musical personality; his composition reminded him of Jommelli's style (not so bad, this!). He added: "How astonished and pleased we are when we find ourselves unexpectedly on such paths: we thus become suddenly aware of our own subconscious life" (*Nachtwandeln*—literally, "sleepwalking").

But his conception of art was too lofty to permit the existence of schoolboy compositions written in a tongue which, no matter how skilfully he spoke it, remained foreign to him.

* * *

What had been his musical development?

As a child in Frankfurt, the Italian arias and the French light operas of Sedaine and Favart, Monsigny and Grétry. (During the Seven Years' War the French had occupied Frankfurt for four years and had brought thither their theatrical companies from Paris.) In Leipzig, the German *Singspiele* (ballad operas) in which Johann Adam Hiller excelled. But the worthy Hiller, whom Goethe knew personally, was much more than an amiable musician: he was one of the greatest musical instructors in Germany. He had founded a weekly musical journal and had organized

¹*Meine Seele löst sich nach und nach durch die lieblichen Töne aus den Banden der Protokolle und Akten* ("Pleasant musical sounds gradually set my soul free from the bonds of protocols and acts") (February 22, 1779). After his almost fatal illness of January 1801, his first desire was to hear music.

excellent symphony and choral concerts ("musical evenings") from which sprang the famous *Gewandhaus* concerts. At these performances Hasse's oratorios were given with excellent singers, who roused the enthusiasm of the youthful listener. Sixty-three years later these memories were still fresh in Goethe's heart and he referred to them in two touching poems, written in 1831 on the occasion of the eighty-second birthday of Gertrud Schmehling (la Mara), the most famous of the soloists who had appeared at these Leipzig concerts. Another of the singers, Korona Schröter, was engaged by Goethe, eight years later, to appear in Weimar; their close friendship, it seems, led them to play with fire—and Goethe paid the price.

During this first period, before Goethe was twenty, the sceptre of music was wielded by Hasse, the great master of pure melody whom even Mozart hardly surpassed. But already Gluck was on the horizon.

It goes almost without saying that Gluck represented for Goethe one of the loftiest peaks in the art of music,¹ and it was not altogether his fault if the two did not collaborate. In 1774, when Goethe's period of *Lieder* was in full blossom, after the delightful spring of Strasbourg, he was trying to find a composer who would walk the same road with him. He asked one of his friends to mention him to Gluck, and she sent some of young Goethe's poems to the old composer. Gluck, unfortunately, was in one of his bad tempers. He refused even to read the poems. He said angrily that he was very busy and that he had all the poets he wanted—Marmontel, Sedaine . . . Alas!

Two years later, in 1776, the rôles were reversed; it was Gluck who approached Goethe. These were sad days for Gluck. In April he had lost his adored niece, Nanette Marianna, "the little Chinese girl," the nightingale whose voice was so frail and pathetic. She was seventeen. Gluck received the terrible news in Paris, on the morning after the first performance of *Alceste*, which had been a complete failure. He was grief-stricken; nothing mattered any longer; music meant nothing to him; he would not compose again. . . . Yes, he would write one more song in which all his

¹Gluck's importance for Goethe, as for Herder and Klopstock, depended not only upon his beautiful and classic construction of a tragedy set to music with choruses, which called to mind the old Greek tragedies, but also upon his happy evocation of the music latent in poetical speech. His small collection of *Lieder* written to Klopstock's odes (and particularly that very brief masterpiece *Die frühen Gräber*, "The Graves of the Young") was an unsurpassed model for all the German artists of the period; it showed poets the way to a *Sprachmelodie* ("melodic speech"), a melody of the word, a musical poetry. It is difficult to realize nowadays what a fountain of study these short odes, so soberly clad in music, were for the greatest writers of that generation in Germany.

love, all his despair, should cry aloud to the world. He wrote to Klopstock, he wrote to Wieland. Both referred him to Goethe, and it was Wieland who put Gluck's request before his young fellow-poet. Goethe was greatly moved; he began to give the matter thought. But those were troubled and feverish days for him. He had just arrived in Weimar, where he was beset by the multiple demands of his amours and *amour propre*. These were the early days of that passionate friendship which was to bring him so many joys, such fertile dreams, such torments: body and soul, he was the slave of Charlotte von Stein.¹ His thoughts, filled for an instant with the grief of the old composer of *Orpheus*, strayed elsewhere; he cast aside the work he had begun.² In vain did Gluck plead. . . .

"My heart is filled with sadness," Goethe wrote to Frau von Stein, "over a poem I am writing for Gluck on the death of his niece" (*Ich wohne in tiefer Trauer über einem Gedicht das ich für Gluck auf den Tod seiner Nichte machen will*).

It seems, however, that the plan he had conceived was too vast.³ He did not find the calm required for such work, and gave it up.⁴

This was not, however, the last time that Goethe and Gluck came in contact. During the years which followed, Gluck was greatly appreciated in Weimar,⁵ and Goethe sought from him not only the creative stimulant which he often looked for in the

¹On May 6, 1776, while in the mountains near Illmenau, he wrote his *Rastlose Liebe* ("Restless Love").

²A fine letter from Wieland to Gluck, of June 13, 1776, tells us of his attempts to approach Goethe, who alone was worthy to write such a work, and the unfortunate circumstances which prevented his plan from being carried out. . . . "I went to see him and showed him your letter. I found him next day already full of a great scheme on this subject; I could see it taking shape, and was delighted, notwithstanding the great difficulties: but what is impossible to Goethe? I saw how lovingly he tended it. Give him but a few days of peace and solitude and what I read in his soul would become a reality. . . . But Fate granted neither him nor you this consolation. . . . His situation here became continually more and more difficult, and his activity was distracted in other directions. . . . In short, there is now practically no hope that he will in the near future complete the work which he began. He certainly did not abandon it of his own free will. I know that from time to time he is still seriously working at it; but what can one expect when, on account of his many duties, he has not a single day he can call his own? However, knowing this great mortal (*den herrlichen Sterblichen*) as I do, I feel certain that he will complete it yet. . . ."

³It has been suggested that it was the first idea of his *Proserpina*.

⁴I have collected a number of documents bearing on this tragic event in Gluck's life. Among these original letters is one from "the little Chinese girl" to Abbé Arnaud, which I think is unique, and also the moving letter from Gluck to Klopstock, written on May 10, 1776, two weeks after his niece's death.

⁵In the grand-ducal library at Weimar there is a magnificent bust of Gluck, purchased by the grand duke directly from the sculptor Houdon, in Paris, in 1775.

works of musicians, but lessons in dramatic style and declamation.¹ His fair friend, Korona Schröter, often sang Gluck to him, and well. When Goethe desired to train for his own personal use a composer who should, as it were, complement him—music, as we shall see, was to him an integral and necessary part of the lyric and theatrical art which never ceased to preoccupy him—he proposed to send Christoph Kayser, whom he had chosen for the purpose, to Gluck. He wrote to Gluck, who at that time was very ill—indeed at death's door—and Gluck at once replied, asking to be excused on account of his paralyzed hand (1780).

At this time (1781) Goethe was much interested in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's musical ideas. His "monodrama" *Proserpina* belongs to a class of play inaugurated by Rousseau's *Pygmalion*.

But another and more powerful star was rising in Goethe's heaven: Handel. Weimar, well ahead of the rest of the country in theatrical matters, saw (January-March, 1781) the first performance in Germany of *Alexander's Feast* and of the *Messiah*. This was a great event for Goethe. He followed the rehearsals very closely and, according to his own confession,² acquired "new ideas of declamation" (*neue Ideen von Deklamation*). To Goethe, Handel remained one of the gods of Olympus, although he had hardly any further opportunities of hearing his music in the little town. (He was later to have it performed by his own choir). This was probably one of the grounds on which his friendship with Zelter was based; it was also a taste he shared with Herder in Weimar. A performance of the *Messiah* had decided the musical career of the young master-mason; it had moved him so deeply that he walked back in tears from Potsdam to Berlin (1783). The two friends were haunted by this great work, to such a point that (for the tercentenary of the Reformation, October 31, 1817) they decided to write together an immense oratorio, a counterpart of the *Messiah*. In letters dating from 1816, Goethe sketched out the main plan—"The two ideas: Necessity and Liberty. . . . In this circle everything is to be found in which man is interested. . . ." The work was to begin with the thunder on Mount Sinai, the "Thou shalt" (*Du sollst*), and end with Christ's resurrection, and the "Thou shalt be" (*Du wirst*). It has been justly pointed out that, although this plan so enthusiastically conceived did not mature, the second *Faust* profited by several of its inspirations; the Epilogue in Heaven is a direct result. Who

¹His letters to Kayser, 1785-86, show how thoroughly he had studied Gluck, his operas, and his *Lieder*.

²Diary, May 13, 1780—January 7, 1781.

would ever have thought to find in *Faust*, in this magnificent peroration, the indirect heir of Handel?

We shall see later how the exultant and illuminating art of Handel affected Goethe's imperious tastes in religious music. There was, in fact, a preëstablished harmony between him and this form of art.

As he grew old, he felt an irresistible desire to bathe again in this fountain of energy. In the spring of 1824 an essay by Rochlitz on the *Messiah* rekindled the fire of his imagination. He wanted to hear it again; and in the kindness of their hearts his Weimar musicians gave him this joy. He steeped himself with delight in Handel's *Geistesgewalt* ("spiritual power"), as he wrote Zelter. If anything could have persuaded him to emerge from his retreat in Weimar and go to Berlin, it was Zelter's great orchestral and choral performances, which were reawakening in Germany the all-embracing spirit of Handel and Bach. Goethe eagerly read Zelter's letters on this subject; and it might be said that through them he heard the performances almost as we should hear them over the radio. "It is," he once said, "as if I heard at a distance the roar of the sea" (*Es ist mir als wenn ich von ferne das Meer brausen hörte*). These are almost the very words Beethoven used in his remark (to Karl Gottlieb Freudenberg, in 1825) on hearing Bach's music: "His name should not be brook (*Bach*), but sea, because of his endless, inexhaustible wealth of tone-combinations and harmonies" (*Nicht Bach sondern Meer sollte er heissen wegen seines unendlichen, unausschöpfbaren Reichthums von Tonkombinationen und Harmonien*). Goethe was not only overwhelmed by these immense oratorios; he also admired their architectural beauty. During the last three years (1829-32) of his life he never tired of studying the construction of the *Messiah*, *Samson*, and *Judas Maccabæus*.

Towards the close of the year 1785 another star was added to his firmament: Mozart. In Weimar he heard *Il Seraglio* for the first time. He was delighted with it. But this opera was a serious blow to him, for just then, with Kayser, he was making great efforts to evolve a form of comedy with music, and now, at a single stroke, Mozart had wiped out his attempts, realizing all his hopes and surpassing his utmost ambitions. Goethe, however, was not so mean as to bear Mozart any ill-will.¹ From the day on which Goethe became director of the Weimar theatre, Mozart reigned supreme, and his reign endured.

¹We cannot understand, however, why he did not try to collaborate with him. No doubt on account of his friendship with Kayser. For this great artist was nevertheless always capable—where the two conflicted—of sacrificing art to friendship.

For we must not forget that, for twenty-six years, from May, 1791, to April, 1817, the climax of his life, Goethe gave himself up to the task, which to us seems ungrateful and out of all proportion to his genius, of directing a provincial theatre where not only plays, but operas also, were given.¹ He took this work very seriously, especially until 1808, when the perpetual quarrels incited by the prima-donna Karolina Jagemann, who was the recognized mistress of the duke and used her position to impose her will on the management of the theatre, caused him the utmost disgust. Now, in this long period during which 600 pieces were performed under his direction, of which 104 were operas, and 31 *Singspiele*, Mozart's works easily held the first place. By 1795, Goethe, summing up the work of the theatre during the first four years, found that no one work had been given more than twelve performances, except *The Magic Flute* with twenty-two, and *Il Seraglio* with twenty-five. Twenty years later the total number of performances of Mozart's operas under Goethe's direction was: 82 of *The Magic Flute*,² 68 of *Don Juan*, 49 of *Il Seraglio*, 33 of *Così fan tutte*, 28 of *Titus*, and 19 of *The Marriage of Figaro*, which strangely enough, was in Weimar always the least successful of Mozart's works. Until the advent of Schiller's dramas, Mozart remained the first favourite; and after Schiller's death, opera again outweighed drama. Goethe's best pieces, *Faust*, *Tasso*, *Iphigenie*, *Goetz von Berlichingen*, were played only long after they were written and on rare occasions. More frequently we find his lighter works, his *Singspiele*, of which even the most popular, *Jery und Bätely*, was given 24 times only. Mozart's supremacy in this theatre is therefore incontestable.

That Goethe agreed with the public verdict is proved by a famous letter to Schiller. The latter had expressed to his friend the great hopes which he had founded on opera; he was even of the opinion that "just as once upon a time tragedy was evolved from the choruses of the ancient feasts of Bacchus, it would again emerge from opera, but in a nobler form," because opera was free from the slavish imitation of nature, and in its art had "free play."

¹The auditorium of the theatre had been burnt out in 1774, shortly before Goethe's arrival (1775). The company was disbanded and an entirely fresh start had to be made.

²It is interesting to note that from 1795 on Goethe intended to write a sequel to the *Magic Flute*, the value of which he defended against the criticism of most of his friends. In 1789 Iffland encouraged him to do it, but Schiller dissuaded him. He published a fragment of it. As late as 1801 he mentioned it to Zelter as a musical poem. Abert, who analyzed the fragment, thinks that it is preparatory to the second *Faust* and considers that of all of Goethe's poems this one best lends itself to interpretation in a rich variety of forms, from tragedy in the style of Gluck to the German *Singspiel*. The chorus plays an independent part. Simple prose is mingled with rhymed rhythms.

Goethe replied: "You would recently have seen your hope for the future of opera realized to a high degree in *Don Juan*. But this work remains unique, and with Mozart's death all hope of anything like it is vain."

He expressed the same regret towards the end of his life—although in 1827 he was distressed at not deriving the same pleasure as before from *The Magic Flute*—when he deplored with Eckermann, in 1829, that he could find no suitable music for *Faust*. "It is quite impossible," said Goethe. "The music would have to be in the character of *Don Juan*. Mozart should have composed it."¹

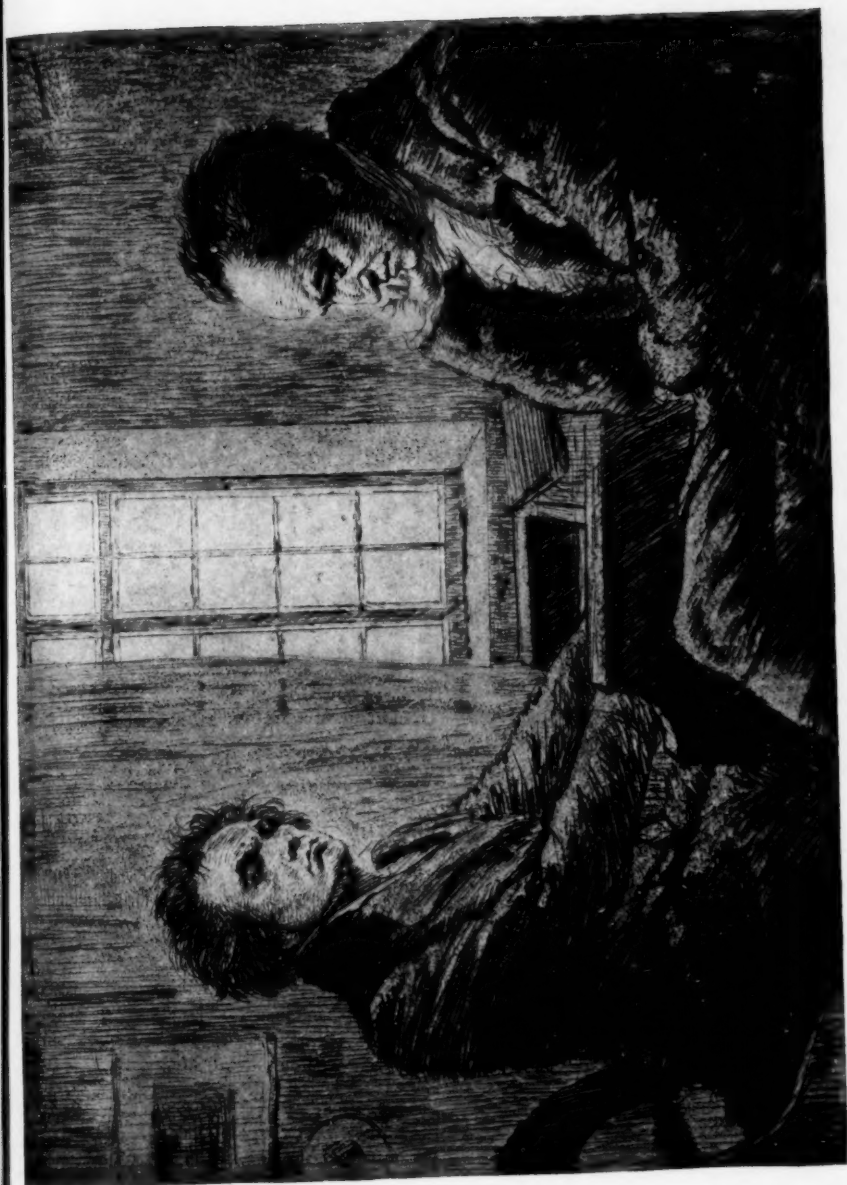
It is said that the last songs Goethe heard were melodies from *Don Juan*, which his grandson Walther sang him on the evening of March 10th (Goethe died on March 22nd).

Among the other masters of the lyric theatre whose works were most frequently performed in Weimar under Goethe's direction we find, during the early days, Dittersdorf, Benda, Paesiello, Cimarosa, Monsigny, Dalayrac, Grétry, Salieri, Sarti; after 1800, Cherubini, Méhul, Boieldieu; after 1810, Paër, Simon Mayr, Spontini. Gluck's works were very rarely given, despite Goethe's wish: in 1800 *Iphigénie en Tauride*, in February, 1832, *Armide*. Weber appeared in 1814 with *Silvana*; Beethoven's *Egmont* was given in 1812-14, and his *Fidelio* in 1816. Then came the period of Rossini's triumphs: *Semiramis*, *La Gazza Ladra*, *The Siege of Corinth*, later *William Tell* and *Moses*. The only works which rivalled his were those of Spontini, for whom Goethe showed much consideration and whom he treated as Rossini's equal, and Weber's *Freischütz*. Finally there was Auber. Goethe, who now went but rarely to the theatre, heard, in 1824 *Euryanthe* and *Freischütz*, *Fernando Cortez*, *Tancredi*, *The Secret Marriage*; in 1826, the *Barber of Seville*; in 1827, *La Gazza Ladra*; in 1828, *La Dame Blanche* and *The Mason*; in 1829, *Oberon*, with which he had no patience. This was the end.

* * *

Dramatic music did not suffice Goethe. He liked sacred music on a large scale, and chamber music.

¹Eckermann, unfortunately, had no one better to suggest than Rossini, and Goethe proposed Meyerbeer! Beethoven's name was not mentioned, even as a regretful afterthought. Yet we know that to write the music to *Faust* was one of Beethoven's ardent desires, and that in 1822 Goethe's friend Rochlitz had been asked by the publisher Breitkopf to propose the poem to Beethoven.



Beethoven Playing to Goethe
(From the etching by Marix Bauer)
(By courtesy of the Beethoven Association)



For the first, the resources available in Weimar were very meagre. During the finest epoch, that of Schiller and Herder, all that was given in the course of ten years were three or four oratorios by Haydn and Graun. The difficulty was that Herder, the general superintendent of schools and churches, and Goethe, the director of the theatre, were compelled by lack of resources to compete for the services of choristers. Herder complained, not without reason, that Goethe deprived him of the seminarist choir; but Goethe was forced to take this step in order to carry on his opera house.

The chamber music consisted principally of concerts by virtuosi. Goethe, however, was not satisfied. His lifelong wish, as he expressed it in *Wilhelm Meister*, was that music should form part of our daily life. His dream was a private choir, and in September, 1807, he carried his plan into effect. The times were ripe for meditation and the culture of the arts. Germany's defeat, after the battle of Jena, forced the country to turn to its own spiritual resources. Bode has pointed out how the different classes of society and the different provinces of the *Vaterland* were brought closer together. Everybody felt, as never before and never afterwards, the need of spiritual communion in their most sacred emotions, both in art and in thought.

Goethe's prestige was growing rapidly during those years; he was well aware that *noblesse oblige* would prevent him from accepting any benefit which should not, at the same time, prove of service to those about him, and through them, Weimar setting the example, to the whole of Germany. Two months after the foundation of his private choir he presented it to a circle of chosen friends, and a month later to the court; still later (February 22, 1810) to the whole town.

This choir, which had very modest beginnings, was really a four-part chorus. The young violinist and composer, Karl Eberwein, soon became the conductor. The repertoire, which increased rapidly, consisted mainly of the great Italian and German sacred music: Jommelli, Joseph Haydn, Mozart, Fasch, Salieri, Ferrari (offertories, motets, canons, hymns), as well as *Lieder* by Zelter, Reichardt, and Eberwein. Even masses and fragments of oratorios were introduced. Goethe's personal influence was naturally felt most in the rendering of the *Lieder* and the humorous compositions, because there the poet and theatrical producer insisted on his rights, dictating *tempi* and style.

But in the execution of both kinds of music, sacred or secular, there was one inexorable law which Goethe imposed on his

musicians and which governed the choice of his programs : he would have none of the tendency, then so common in Germany, to whining, to religious lamentations and love laments, to what he called "graveyard music." Though the particular circumstances of that period would have admitted, or even prompted, melancholy, this energetic man forbade its expression. He cursed the weeping-willow poets who had opened the flood-gates of this mournful inundation, among them Matthisson and Tiedge, both friends of Beethoven. I am not sure that the mere mention of the subject did not set him against the immortal song-cycle, *An die ferne Geliebte* ("To the distant beloved"), which his Suleika, Marianna von Willemer, recommended so strongly to him. In the course of a journey in 1817 he heard a melancholy love song, "I have loved and love no more; I have laughed and laugh no more . . ."; he was furious and wrote, at his hotel table: "I have loved, and now I begin to love more than ever. . . . Today as yesterday, the bright star palpitates. Avoid as you would the plague those whose heads are bowed in woe. Live always as if life were just beginning!" (*und lebe dir immer von vornen!*) This was another trait, one of the best, which he shared with Zelter, who bore so many troubles on his shoulders and shook them off so cheerily.

What Goethe demanded both of sacred and of secular music was that it should set free the joy of living, moral confidence, whole-hearted energy, the sense of the eternal, contempt for pettiness, for nothingness, and above all, the powers of reason: order, clarity of mind. In that he is blood brother to Handel. What would not these two together have done, the Apollo of Weimar and the English Hercules? This preference was undoubtedly detrimental to Beethoven, yet he would have been the first to approve it. It was not Beethoven's fault if he did not follow the same road as Handel. It was an ideal for which he sighed, but which the torments of his nature prevented his attaining. Besides, let us make no mistake : for Goethe, too, Handel represented an ideal character, whose blissful plenitude and serenity attracted him all the more because he himself did not possess them, as he told his friend Councillor von Müller. Comparing and contrasting himself with Napoleon—who loved only tender and melancholy music because these qualities were opposed and complementary to his own character—Goethe said that soft and sentimental melodies depressed him: "I need lively (*frische*) and energetic music to grip and uplift me. Napoleon, who was a tyrant, needed softness in music. I, for the very reason that I am not a tyrant, love lively, gay, merry (*rauschende, lebhaft, heitere*)

music. Man aspires always to be what he is not."¹ Should we therefore be justified in saying that Goethe was not drawn to Beethoven because he saw in the composer what he himself was—what he himself did not wish to be? . . .

At home and in his choir, he cultivated gay secular music, folk-song especially, and virile sacred music. He was also very fond of string-quartets, the form of instrumental music he liked best. Here again he agrees with Beethoven whose essential nature found expression from beginning to end in the string quartet. . . . Verily, the quadriga becomes Apollo. . . . What Goethe derived above all from this form of music was a pleasure founded on reason:

"One hears," he wrote to Zelter (November 9th, 1829), "four people of good sense discoursing together; one feels that one learns something from what they are saying, and one becomes acquainted with the individuality of each of them."

He disliked, however, the violent shocks produced by the new instrumental music. He must have seen in it an attack upon the liberty of the mind, which is surprised and brutally violated. All that the mind can not grasp thoroughly, all that he summed up in the word *Meteorisches* (of meteoric quality), was suspect, even antagonistic to him. It is probable that under this term he condemned—or at least held aloof—together with Weber's operas, some of Beethoven's symphonies: the Dionysiac orgies and hurricanes.

His private choir lasted but seven or eight years. As in the theatre, he succumbed to the poisonous intrigues of a petty, vain, and bickering horde, whose ways he so well knew (he describes them in masterly fashion in *Wilhelm Meister*), but who attracted him nevertheless. After 1814 he kept only two or three of his musicians, who had become his personal friends.

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At this moment, just as the springs of his musical knowledge seemed about to run dry, his horizon was widened enormously by his acquaintance with the works of Bach.

The Bachs had always been known in Weimar, where they had neighbors and relatives. John Sebastian came to Weimar on two occasions, in 1703 for a few months and in 1708 for nine

¹June 24, 1826. "Every day I am fonder of music which excites (*das Aufregende*)," he had written forty years previously, in 1787, during his travels in Italy, where the sugary sentimentality of the *opera seria* bored him.

years, as organist and *Kapellmeister*. His Weimar pupils maintained his traditions in that town for half a century (Johann Kaspar Vogler being organist there for forty-four years, until 1765). The dowager duchess, too, who came from Brunswick and was a good musician, had studied under John Ernest Bach of Eisenach, who had followed her to Weimar. It is probable that she often played John Sebastian's works to Goethe.

Goethe must also have met many admirers of the great Bach, for they were numerous in those days: for instance, the young Count Wolf Baudissin, who used to say that he was ready to die for Bach, much to Goethe's disgust. Goethe's friend Rochlitz, the historian of music, had in 1800 reminded the all-too-forgetful German people that Bach's last surviving daughter was living in utter poverty, and had asked the public to send donations for her; a charitable appeal which Beethoven warmly supported. Lastly, Zelter had given, in 1810, short lectures to Goethe on John Sebastian and his great rivals or forerunners. Goethe, therefore, was well informed of Bach's importance and of his place in the evolution of music.

But the direct experience of Bach's music and the definite impression it left on him, in 1814, he owed to Johann Heinrich Schütz, his friend the inspector of Berka Spa, near Weimar. This funny little fat man with his rubicund face, and his top-hat set askew on his head, was a passionate admirer of Bach. He had bought bundles of manuscript music from John Sebastian's last pupil, Kittell of Erfurt. This music he played to Goethe, who was at once greatly impressed and remained so to the end of his days, which shows that his musical disposition was essentially serious. He was never tired of hearing the *Well-tempered Clavichord* and was always asking Schütz to play him the preludes and fugues. He likened them to "works of illumined mathematics with themes so simple and poetical results so grandiose."¹ From that time Schütz and Goethe met constantly. Each would visit the other in the neighboring town. At once the piano would be opened, and inspired reason, in a never-ending stream of music, would pour forth. In 1818, Goethe had Bach's music played to him for three whole weeks, three or four hours a day. He expressed his utter contentment in these words: "I go to bed, and Schütz plays me Sebastian."

Schütz sometimes played well into the night. Goethe, Zelter, and he often gave one another Bach's music as presents—his chorales, for instance, and the *Well-tempered Clavichord*. Nor

¹Eduard Genast, *Aus Weimar's Klassischer und Nachklassischer Zeit*.

must we forget that Zelter—Goethe's fidus Achates—was the first to revive the *Passion according to St. Matthew*, this being his greatest claim to fame. He conducted it in Berlin with his *Sing-Akademie*—his "regiment," as he called it—with the support of young Mendelssohn.¹ Zelter's letters to Goethe resound with the great organ-tones he had let loose,² and Goethe's whole being, from afar, vibrated with this oceanic roar.³

Since for Goethe there was no musical enjoyment in which reason did not share, his letters to Zelter frequently show his scientific interest in Bach. Now he is studying the second volume of Rochlitz's *Essays On Bach's compositions for the Keyboard* (1825); now he questions Zelter eagerly on the Couperins and the influence they were supposed to have had on John Sebastian (1827); now, his anthropocentric genius always seeking the principles of art and science in the laws that govern the human body and its sensibilities,⁴ he points out—studying the relations of body and mind in music—the importance as shown in Bach, of the foot and of the hand.⁵

Goethe's ken extended far beyond John Sebastian and that pre-classic age of which the men of letters and even the musicians of his day knew so little. It embraced the vocal polyphony of the sixteenth century. He had discovered its beauty during his stay in Rome in Lent, 1788, at the Sistine Chapel, and his friend Christoph Kayser had helped him to understand it. They had listened together assiduously to the *a cappella* works of Palestrina, Morales, and Allegri. In Milan they had studied the Ambrosian chants.

¹March 11, 21, and April 17, 1829. Soon after these great performances, Mendelssohn came to spend two weeks in Weimar. He spoke of them to Goethe and played some excerpts to him. Goethe was delighted to find that, contrary to what had recently happened in the case of Mozart, his taste for Bach's music had not weakened. He listened to Mendelssohn "with pleasure, interest, and reflection" (1830).

²"It almost seems," wrote Zelter, "as if the whole ensemble were an organ, each pipe of which is endowed with intelligence, energy, and will power, without mannerisms and without being forced (*Zwang*)."

³Bach's music makes him think of the God of Genesis. His fine saying is well known: *als wenn die ewige Harmonie sich mit sich selbst unterhielte, wie sich's etwa in Gottes Busen, kurz vor der Welterschöpfung, möchte zugetragen haben* ("As if Eternal Harmony were talking with itself, as it must have been doing in God's bosom just before the Creation"). (Correspondence with Zelter, II, 95, Reclam edition.)

⁴"Man's self, in so far as he employs his healthy senses, is the most powerful and the most accurate physical apparatus in existence" (Letter of 1808 to Zelter, to which I shall refer again later). Goethe always opposed the aesthetic tenets of mathematicians and physicians, who depend on artificial instruments and disregard the most perfect of all instruments: the living man.

⁵Goethe had been delighted to hear that Bach's contemporaries were amazed at the skill and agility of his legs at the organ, a fact which supported his own theory. Zelter, poking fun at the mania of the great man, his friend, on this subject, said, "Without feet, Bach would never have reached the height of his genius."

Goethe had also commissioned Kayser to make researches into ancient music, because his intuition told him that here was to be found the source of Christian chants.¹ Later, in 1808, when Goethe attended the Easter services at Weimar which were sung by the Greek choir of the hereditary princess, he was struck by the close relation between the Russian hymns and the Sistine chants and he asked Zelter to tell him something of the origin of old Byzantine music. But Zelter's classical erudition was so poor that he did not even know the meaning of the name "Byzantium."²

In Rochlitz he would have found a musical guide of much greater culture. But, in spite of his long association with him, it seems as though Goethe feared to offend his old friend Zelter if he summoned Rochlitz to Weimar.³ He read Rochlitz's books at least; and especially during the latter part of his life, when he went out less, he busied himself with musical history.⁴

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Still his intellectual hunger was not satisfied. In music, as in all other branches of knowledge, his mind sought to deduce a scientific theory from his experiences and the facts which came to his knowledge. He sought to establish a *Tonlehre* (Theory of Musical Sounds) as a parallel to his *Farbenlehre* (Colour Theory). His aim was the discovery, in the multiplicity of phenomena, of the primitive and central Oneness: *So muss das alles eins werden, alles aus Einem entspringen und zu Einem zurückkehren . . .* (1810) ("So everything must become one, everything must issue from one source, and must revert to it").

He found some eminent associates with whom to discuss the problem of natural science in music: the mathematician, Johann Friedrich Christian Werneburg of Eisenach (about 1808-11), and the famous specialist in acoustics, Ernst Chladni of Wittenberg

¹He corresponded with the philologist, Fr. A. Wolf, on the subject of Greek music.

²In revenge, in 1810 Zelter gave him a lecture on Pope Marcellus II and Palestrina's *Mass*.

³I have already remarked how often excessive scruples of friendship, much as they were to his honour, harmed him intellectually.

⁴Between 1824 and 1832 he read a number of books and treatises on music, notably those of Rochlitz on the fugue, on the origins of the opera, on church music since the days of Orland Lasso, etc. He read the musical journals carefully, particularly the *Cecilia* of Gottfried Weber.

Nor must we forget the pedagogical importance he attached to music. In *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Wandering* (II, 1), music is at the root of all instruction. It is the central point from which all roads diverge: exercises of the hand, the ear, the eye, writing, arithmetic, etc.

(between 1803 and 1816), whom he liked for his independence of academic science. But usually these discussions were held with his Zelter, who recited to him such science as he had learnt by heart and whose schoolboy creeds Goethe mercilessly crushed, and an intelligent young man, Christian Schlosser, whom Goethe intended to make his musical secretary, to write, in accordance with his own principles, the *Tonlehre* which he proposed to publish. Schlosser, however, was not interested in this. Without his collaboration, Goethe was unable to carry out his plan, but he never abandoned the scheme (he speaks of it in his letters of 1829-1831). So keen was his interest in it, that, as late as 1827, he had the principles of his *Tonlehre* written out elaborately on a large chart, which he framed and hung in his bedroom. Although, according to his own admission, he never got beyond the mere skeleton of this science, his theories have been considered worthy of discussion by certain æstheticians among contemporary musicologists. Hans Joachim Moser has published a monograph on *Goethe und die Musikalische Akustik*,¹ and Hugo Riemann expressed his approval of Goethe's theories.

The problem which interested Goethe particularly, and at which he worked till the eve of his death, returning to it in 1831, was that of the minor mode. He discussed it with Zelter in 1808, 1810, and 1821, and with Schlosser in 1814-15. Zelter's replies did not satisfy him at all, for Zelter had recourse to explanations based on the physics of music—i.e., the divisions of the string. The minor third, according to him, was not a spontaneous manifestation of nature, but an artificial product obtained by diminishing the major third. Goethe denied this. It is human nature, he said, which is the spring of the musical universe (*Tonwelt*). It is here that we must search, and not among the artificial instruments used in mathematical experiment. "What are a string and its mechanical divisions, compared with the musician's ear? Yes, we can go so far as to say, What are natural phenomena compared with man who must first master and modify them all, in order to be able, in a certain degree, to assimilate them?" (1808).

His powerful subjectivism eagerly seized upon Schlosser's suggestion, that the two modes, major and minor, are two different states of the same and single *tone-monad*—a living Unit of sound. "If the tone-monad expands, the result is the major mode, if it contracts, the minor mode is produced." The centre of the monad is formed by the deepest tone, and the periphery by the highest. But on the æsthetic and moral qualities of the two modes, Goethe

¹*Festschrift zu R. von Liliencron's 90. Geburtstage.*

and Schlosser did not agree. Schlosser, with a strong inclination towards romantic religiosity, was of the opinion that music's centre of gravity was to be found in the melancholy of the soul which tends to introspection and withdraws from outside influences: the minor mode was therefore the most intimate expression of the human heart in its aspiration towards the infinite. Goethe protested against this; no, he would never permit sadness to be made the core of the soul and of art. He was willing to admit that human nature has a double tendency: on the one hand to the objective, to activity, to external things; on the other, to the subjective, to concentration, to inner things. The major mode is the expression of all that excites, exalts, and propels the soul toward the outer world. And, if you will, the minor is the mode of concentration. But concentration is in no sense synonymous with sadness. No, a thousand times no! What is there sad about the polonaises that are in a minor key? The polonaise is a social dance, and the society reflected in it, as in a convex mirror, is drawn together into closest contact. Is this sadness, or is it not the height of voluptuousness?¹ (How fine it is to watch the vigorous Goethe, brushing aside with a sweep of his hand all the melancholy of effeminate romanticism which was to come!)

But there is another example, and a much more interesting one. I mean the *Marseillaise*—that *Marseillaise* which Beethoven, in some inexplicable way, never seems to have noticed and of which I cannot discover a single trace in his work. (How utterly unaware he was of it is shown by the fact that, as late as 1813, he introduced the grotesque Malbrouck march in his *Battle of Vittoria* to personify the French.)² Goethe had heard it on the battlefield, in the Argonne, at Valmy, at Mainz—and never during his whole life did he forget the thrill of it. Indeed, what he remembered of it (a striking phenomenon!) was the sombre and menacing minor, the shadow, not the light. But for him this shadow had nothing in common with a depression of the spirit. It was, on the contrary, an explosion of avenging fury. . . .

¹Compare the definition of the minor in his *Prose Thoughts, Part VII*: "The minor mode is the harmony of passionate desire, the desire which aspires to what is afar off, but, concentrated in melodious meditation, produces the minor mode" (*Die Sehnsucht die nach aussen, in die Ferne strebt, sich aber melodisch in sich selbst beschränkt, erzeugt den minor* [Nachlass]).

²For a solution of this musical puzzle I have consulted the kindly erudition of the two undoubted experts on the history of popular songs in France and Germany—M. Julien Tiersot, the historian of Rouget de Lisle, and Professor Max Friedlaender, who has nothing to learn on the subject of the German *Volkslied* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The exact information which they have been good enough to afford me makes Beethoven's silence still more remarkable.

"I know nothing more terrible than military music in a minor key. Here the two extremes clash, and wound the heart instead of stunning it. The most remarkable example of this is the *Marseillaise*." (*Dagegen ich nie etwas schrecklicheres gekannt habe als einen kriegerischen Marsch aus dem Mollton. Hier wirken die beiden Pole innerlich gegeneinander und quetschen das Herz, anstatt es zu indifferenzieren. Das eminenteste Beispiel gibt uns der Marseiller Marsch.*)¹

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We have seen how vast and long was Goethe's musical experience; he had played himself, he had heard a great variety of musical performances, he had meditated upon music, he had studied its history and science. What then were his shortcomings? What was there in the music of the time which escaped him?

Intellectually, very little indeed. The new tendencies which were working in music he felt as well as others. In June, 1805, when writing a commentary on *Le Neveu de Rameau*, he distinguished between two musical schools—the Italian, essentially vocal and melodic, and the German, instrumental and harmonic—and he longed for the advent of the master, who, uniting the two, should introduce into instrumental music the powers of sentiment (*Gemütskräfte*).²

He was right, and his conclusion should have been: "The master has come . . . he is Beethoven." But at that time Goethe had not yet heard any of Beethoven's music.³

Did Goethe lay down any limits to the expressive and descriptive powers of art and of sound? None. When, in 1818, Adalbert Schoepke asked him, "How much can music imitate?" Goethe replied, "Nothing and everything. . . . *Nothing* that we receive directly through the external senses; but *everything* that we feel inwardly through the intermediary of these senses. . . . To create

¹February 10, 1815. This impression clearly echoes that which Goethe directly received at Mainz twenty-two years before, and which is recorded in his story of the siege after the French garrison had marched out. "The most remarkable scene, and the one which struck all of us, was the appearance of the light cavalry. They had advanced upon us in complete silence: suddenly their band struck up the *Marseillaise*. There is something mournful and threatening in this *Te Deum* of the Revolution even when it is played in lively fashion. On this occasion, however, it was played very slowly, in time to their slow pace. The effect was terrible and awe-inspiring" (from Porchat's French translation).

²At which Zelter, who had never considered the matter at all, cried in astonishment, "You and he (*Le Neveu de Rameau*) understand music better than I."

³It seems that he heard a piece by Beethoven for the first time five months later.

a mood within us, without using the common external means, is the great and noble privilege of music" (*Das Innere in Stimmung zu setzen, ohne die gemeinen äusseren Mitteln zu brauchen, ist der Musik grosses und edles Vorrecht.*)

These are exactly the principles of Beethoven: *Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Mahlerey* (rather an expression of feelings than a pictorial representation). More than that, Goethe concedes to music—and counts it its glory—the high privilege of outdistancing reason, of penetrating regions forever closed to speech and to analytic intelligence. In his conversations with Eckermann (1831) on "matters demonic" (*das Dämonische*) he referred to the unconscious or subconscious poetry for the comprehension of which intelligence and reason prove insufficient, and continued:

"The same applies in the highest degree to music, because music occupies so lofty a plane that no reason can approach it; and from music emanates an influence which dominates everything, and for which no man can account to himself" (*Desgleichen ist es in der Musik im höchsten Grade, denn sie steht so hoch dass kein Verstand ihr beikommen kann, und es geht von ihr eine Wirkung aus, die Alles beherrscht und von der Niemand im Stande ist sich Rechenschaft zu geben*).

Is not this a confirmation of the exalted credo that Beethoven expressed to Bettina? "Music is the only, the immaterial means of entry into a higher world of knowledge which envelopes man but which he cannot grasp." It is no mean thing that this sovereign of intelligence, the great Goethe, should at the close of his life have come to recognize the regal rights of musical intuition.

Should not Beethoven and Goethe, then, have agreed? What was the stumbling-block to Goethe's musical understanding? As far as intellectual understanding is concerned, there was none. But his physiological tolerance failed him when those natural limits were reached which time imposes on organic sensitiveness. It was asking too much of a man of the time of Cimarosa, Haydn, and Mozart to share the feelings of the time of Weber, Schubert, and Berlioz.¹ Is any one of us capable of a complete rejuvenation after half a century of life? The only new musical genius whom Goethe could normally have accepted and made his own, during his lifetime, was Beethoven. I have tried to explain the reasons why he failed to do so.

¹Goethe, a year old when Bach died, and ten years old when Handel died, was born the same year as Cimarosa. He was twenty-five when Jommelli died, forty-two when Mozart died, and sixty the year of Haydn's death. But he was twenty-seven when Weber was born, forty-eight when Schubert was born, and fifty-four in the year of Berlioz's birth.

The greatness and originality of Weber, Schubert, Berlioz, certainly escaped him. But it is of interest to examine more closely certain of his failures in understanding, particularly in the case of Schubert.

When Schubert—who had made his first appearance in 1814, at the age of seventeen, and during the following year had set to music a dozen of Goethe's *Lieder*—composed in 1816 his splendid *Erl King*, and in that same year asked the poet, through his friend Spaun, for permission to dedicate this work to him, Goethe did not reply. He did not read music. Not that he was unable to, but he did not have the time. And who should have played this song to him? Who, in 1816, knew the name of Schubert?

His mistake was more serious when, ten years later, on June 16, 1825, Goethe received (on the same day with a quartet by Mendelssohn) the wonderful song, *An Schwager Kronos*, and two others, *An Mignon* and *Ganymed*, with a humble dedication to himself from Schubert. Goethe mentioned with satisfaction the gift from Mendelssohn, whom he liked personally, but he never replied to Schubert. Was there no excuse for him? Weimar's best musician, Hummel, did not discover Schubert until 1827; and Marianna von Willemer, who, always well in advance of others, had been greatly impressed by the songs from the *Divan* and had mentioned them to Goethe, had forgotten only one detail in her letter—the composer's name!

There is, however, proof that between 1825 and 1830 Goethe heard some of Schubert's most famous *Lieder*, and that his first reaction was strong disapproval. One was the *Erl King*. Can we wonder? Goethe naturally judged it from the poet's point of view.¹ He had written a poem such as a poor washerwoman might hum as she worked, almost without thinking; the song weaves around her and her work an atmosphere of folk-song. And here the poet is presented with an imaginary melodrama of the romantic stage, in which the tempest rages. He is annoyed with the lightning flashes and the rolling thunder, so inappropriate to his pastoral idyll. He sees in the song merely bombast and lack of intelligence. He shrugs his shoulders. . . . We can hear Zelter scoffing at Beethoven, "Those people that use the club of Hercules to kill a fly!"

¹In the *Lieder* in which the music is written under his dictation, so to speak, he insists that it shall follow the minutest details of the text, the divisions into verses and strophes, the punctuation and the declamation. When the poem contains several strophes he must have the same melody for each; it is the singer's business to vary the expression. In 1822 again, speaking of a setting which he likes, by Tomaschek, of his *Kennst du das Land*, he expresses his displeasure with Beethoven and Spohr, who have disregarded his instructions about the return of the melody with each strophe. Where he has written *Lied*, he will not allow an *Aria*.

If there was one vice in art which Goethe could not tolerate, it was that of *non erat is locus* ("a thing out place"). But grumble as he might at the composer's disregard in taking liberties with his intentions, could he not have been artist enough to see the beauty of the music, even if its effect differed from his own conception?

He did recognize it. When on April 24, 1830, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient came to his house and sang the *Erl King*, he was moved to the very fibres of his being, and he was noble enough to make his *mea culpa* to the spirit of Schubert. He said: "I had already heard this song, and it meant nothing to me. But sung like this, it conjures up a great picture before my eyes." And he kissed the forehead of the inspiring singer.

Similarly, a month later (May 25) he had at last to bow his head, whether he liked it or not, before the elemental force of the *C minor Symphony*, played to him in his house by Mendelssohn.

At the age of eighty-one he had still sufficient vigor to leap the mighty cleft which Beethoven and Schubert had broken in his path. Is this not an achievement? None could say that in him old age had frozen the stream of life. Which of us at his age would keep so open a mind and display such energy?

As to Berlioz, Goethe never heard a note of his music. Zelter's abominable letter, in which he poured a stream of the vilest invective on Berlioz's *Eight Scenes from Faust*, had utterly disgusted him (June, 1829).

In the case of Weber, finally, Goethe's lack of appreciation was due fundamentally to the personal antipathy—physical and moral—referred to above, and to the old man's intolerance of the din of brasses and percussion instruments in the new orchestras. Even Spontini, whom Goethe held in particularly high esteem, upset him with his noisy orchestration of his *Vestale*. "This noise," he told Christian Lobe, "soon tires me" (*mich bald ermüdet*). To which Lobe replied that one got used to it as one had got used to Mozart, who at first proved very tiring. "But there must be a limit," Goethe went on, "beyond which one cannot go without the ear rebelling." "No doubt there is," replied the young man. "But the fact that most people can now listen to Spontini, seems to prove that this limit has not yet been reached." And Goethe, faced with the fact, admitted that it might be so (*Es mag sein*).

But this was in truth the whole point, and this was the secret reason of the *dignus intrare*, which he granted, or refused, to the new works of art: "There must be a limit. . . ." Yes. But where is it? Nothing is more natural than that in 1829 the aged Goethe

and his old friend Zelter should have found that modern music had passed this limit, not only in the means which it employed, but also in its portrayal of emotion.

"It exceeds the level of human sensibility. We can no longer follow it with mind and heart" (*Alles ist jetzt ultra. Alles transzendiert unaufhaltsam an Denken und Tun. . .*).

Just as our pre-war generation judges the youth of today, so Goethe deplored that, long before maturity, the younger generation had been shaken to the roots, "that the whirlwind of the times had carried it away" before quiet and meditation had had time to restore to it balance of personality. The year 1830, as Goethe saw it, was already given over to the turmoil of noise and action, for which we blame—or praise—the year 1930. In reality it is the periodical conflict of two successive stages of sensitiveness, a conflict which follows unceasingly a curve of regular progression, without, however, passing certain limits; for, as the peak is reached, the bottom drops out, the former sensibility has become inadequate; yet the whole keyboard retains about the same number of octaves. But, while the structure remains the same, the mentality which is housed in it shifts from one level to another. And as organic tolerance thus moves with the times, those who live longer than the normal span of life are bound to suffer from variations in the rhythm and intensity of sensation: they cannot acclimatize themselves to the new conditions.

This is only normal in the onward march of the generations. Goethe—who at the beginning of his artistic career had heard, in 1763, little Mozart play, and just before his death had listened to little Clara Wieck (October 4 and 5, 1831), who was to become the muse and the wife of Schumann—Goethe had magnificently withstood the test of these two different epochs.

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Our survey of Goethe's musical disposition would be far from complete if we merely considered its passive side—hearing and understanding. A powerful nature, a mind such as his, receives nothing without restoring it enriched and ennobled. Wherever Goethe passed, he created. As he was not a musician by profession, but a poet, it is interesting to discover what traces music has left in his poetry.

The first, which surprises us, because of the importance which Goethe attributes to it and the tenacity with which he persevered in it, is his keen desire to write libretti. This amounted to an

obsession.¹ Many hours, many days were given to this work; his efforts and his researches deserved a nobler object and a more striking success. And though he always failed, he never gave up.

Goethe sketched or attempted one form of musical play after another. Hardly out of small clothes, he wrote (1766) a libretto for an Italian operetta, *La sposa rapita*.² Then followed the German *Singspiel* (ballad opera), or the *Lustspiel* (prose comedy), with arias and *Lieder*; in 1773-74 he wrote his *Erwin und Elmire*, for which Johann Andreas Offenbach wrote the tunes. Later in life, as we have seen, he dreamt of collaborating with Gluck, and when rebuffed by the old man, chose a young and gifted musical friend, Christoph Kayser, whom he hoped to shape in accordance with his views. At the same time, with his friend Korona Schröter, he mastered the art of the ballet and devised new forms (1782). During the first period of his life at Weimar everything he wrote was intended for accompaniment by instrumental or vocal music. A good example of this is his *Proserpina* (1776), a monodrama spoken to music, after the style of Rousseau. Another example is his *Lila*, a fairy opera. It was then that he studied Handel's and Gluck's declamatory style. His plans, however, could not be fully carried out in Weimar, because he lacked the coöperation of a competent musician.

¹This curious passion for libretti persisted till his very last years. In 1828 he amused himself by rewriting the libretto for Rossini's *Moses*. He wanted to rewrite his *Tancredi* in the form of a *favola boscareccia* in the fashion of Poussin. A month before his death, in February, 1832, he dictated a long essay on the poems of Jouy, the librettist of Spontini. He was enthusiastic over Handel's libretti, and could not forgive Weber those of *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*. Here Beethoven shared his views; in the eyes of both, the best opera libretto was that of *The Water Carrier* of Cherubini.

He would never judge an opera independently of the words. The words first! "I don't understand you, my good children!" he cried in 1828. "How can you possibly separate the subject from the music and enjoy one without regard to the other? I marvel at you. How can the hearing contrive to appreciate the pleasures of harmony, when the sight, most powerful of the senses, is tortured by the imbecility of the subject. . . ." (Instead of sight he might well have said reason, and reason is the subject of the rest of the homily. But as a matter of fact the eye was, with Goethe, the organ of reason.) He was right. Most composers possess very poor sight, and still less reason. We do not blame them for it; let them have asses' ears. But there is nothing to compel them to put their music into operas, that is to say to torture both sight and common sense. I cordially approve Goethe's sentiments, and Beethoven I know would have cried, "Bravo."

²The most curious of these musical works of his early youth is a *Concerto Dramatico composto Dal. Sigr. Dottore Flamminio, detto Panurgo secondo*, written at Frankfurt in the autumn of 1772. (It may be found on pp. 77-82, Vol. III, of *Der Junge Goethe*, Max Morris edition, 1910, Inselverlag.) This "concerto," the word being used in the old meaning of "cantata," was composed "for performance in the *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, at Darmstadt." It is a ludicrous succession of pieces which are given musical titles, with expression and tempo-marks: *Tempo giusto C, Allegretto 3-8, Arioso, Allegro con furia, Cantabile, Lamentabile; ein wenig geschwinder, con speranza, Allegro con spirito, Choral, Capriccio con variazioni 1, 2, 3; Air Français, Molto andante, Con espressione*, and, to end up, *Presto fugato* with a double choir imitating in burlesque fashion the sounds of the instruments: *Dum du, dum du. Dum dim di di du (bis) Hohul Hohul . . .*

In 1779-80 he went with his grand duke to Switzerland. His chief motive for going was the hope of meeting Kayser again, who had settled in Zürich, and of writing with him a *Singspiel* on a Swiss subject. This was *Jery und Bätely*. His letters to Kayser give us a very clear definition of the music which he wanted. This time it was Quinault who gave orders to Lulli.*

For this play Goethe wanted three distinct kinds of music:

1. Popular *Lieder* or Folk-songs;
2. Arias, expressing emotions;
3. Rhythmic dialogue, adapted to the miming of the actors.

This dialogue must preserve a unity of style, which should be based, if possible, on a principal theme and developed and varied through modulation, tonality and rhythm, but always maintaining its logic and line, simple, limpid and clear. "The dialogue must be like a smooth golden ring, in which the Arias and *Lieder* are set like precious stones" (*Der Dialog muss wie ein glatter goldener Ring sein, auf dem Arien und Lieder wie Edelgesteine aufsitzen.* December 29th, 1779).

The composer, Goethe maintained, must first absorb thoroughly the character of the piece. This general character should dictate the style of all the melodies and accompaniments. The orchestra should be quite small, and the accompaniment discreet. "The riches of music lie in discretion. A composer who knows his work can do more with two violins, a viola, and a bass, than others with a whole orchestra." The wood-winds serve only as spice. The instruments should be used one by one: now the flute, now the oboe, now the bassoon. Thus we enjoy more what we taste pure; whereas most modern composers serve everything together, with the result that fish and meat, roasts and boiled dishes, all taste alike. (January 20th, 1780.)

Goethe, however, was then only at the beginning of his troubles with Kayser. The latter worked so slowly at his composition, that Goethe had to take the play from him and give it to an amateur, a gentleman in charge of the court entertainments at Weimar. And Goethe lost all interest in the work. Nevertheless, he did not give up his Kayser. He had him invited to Weimar. In vain did he try to make a man of the world of him, in vain did he urge him to take to heart the last teachings of the dying

*Translator's Note—Lulli, the court musician of Louis XIV, was accustomed to prescribe to Quinault, a poet of merit, the subject and treatment of the libretti which he required for his operas.

Gluck. In vain—all in vain! Yet in 1783 he wrote the *libretti* for five *Singspiele*.¹

Some time afterwards he heard a good Italian company and at once abandoned the bastard form of spoken dialogue interlarded with songs : *opéra-comique*. He wanted to write—still always with Kayser's coöperation!—*intermezzi*, entirely sung: *opera buffa*. For five years, from 1784 to 1789, he doggedly worked at an *intermezzo*, with three characters—Scapin, Scapine, and the Doctor—*Scherz, List und Rache* ("Jest, Cunning, and Vengeance"). On this subject he corresponded with Kayser almost as extensively as he corresponded with Schiller on the subject of *Wilhelm Meister*. All the evidence goes to show that he attached far greater importance to the subject than it really deserved. He desired to create in Germany a new art of music-drama and he wanted his first attempt to be a masterpiece. But apart from the fact that he had no (support) and had to do both his composer's work and his own, it was an art of which he knew nothing and which he was himself learning: *Fit fabricando faber*. Unfortunately, the knowledge he gathered as he went along came too late to show him his errors as he made them. When he saw Mozart's *Il Seraglio*, in 1785, he realized his weak points. Mozart, without any of Goethe's hard thinking, but from sheer instinct, from the impulse of genius, had cast upon the German stage a comedy with music, full of feeling, scintillating with joy, like the rain and sunshine of a lovely day in spring. Thus Goethe discovered the utter sterility of the intellectual perfection which he had conceived in a work so deeply—all too deeply—thought out. There were only three characters in the four acts, all three of them rogues. He now decided to have seven characters and to give emotion a large part in the plot. But a casting which is almost cold cannot be remolded; Kayser had already shaped himself in the first mold, had lost all elasticity, and could not follow the constant changes of his great collaborator's mind. The final result was an unheard-of waste of time, and an enormous amount of work expended for nothing. In the autumn of 1789, Goethe, honest as always, reckoning up profit and loss admitted that "all this tremendous work is lost" (*geht die ungeheure Arbeit verloren*).²

¹Abert has analyzed these libretti and has made a list of the many and varied forms of aria, ensemble, and chorus. He shows that Goethe had a remarkable knowledge of every kind of theatrical music of his time, French, Italian, and German.

²Meanwhile Goethe heard at Weimar and in Italy (September 3, 1786—June 18, 1788) a number of Italian *opera buffe* by Goldoni, Piccini, Salieri, and Cimarosa. He drank them in; he revised and rearranged his old *Singspiele* in the light of his new experience of the Italian stage. He even intended to put his *Scherz, List und Rache* into

The most enduring relic of all this work is perhaps his correspondence with Kayser, in which we find a powerful and striking æsthetic of the theatre. Goethe insisted that everything in this work should be *saltatio*,¹ which he described to Kayser as a continuous melodic and rhythmic movement. He mentioned this repeatedly: "My highest conception of drama is ceaseless action" (*Mein höchster Begriff vom Drama ist rastlose Handlung*). Here again Goethe nearly went too far in his conception of intellectual perfection. But he pulled himself together. His knowledge of the psychology of the public, all the keener for his experience of the theatre and of actors, showed him that it was impossible to realize such a plan. Human nature would not lend itself to it. Goethe came to the conclusion that repose must alternate with movement, and that the climax of movement and of sound must be reserved for the finales of the piece. The masters of Italian *opera buffa* had instinctively made this a rule.

Goethe also gave much time to the careful study of prosody in comedy with music. In this he did not follow the Italian example. Instead of adopting the even flow proper to *bel canto*, he broke its course wherever the action became passionate. His ideal of those days was very Mozartian and had nothing academic or pompous about it; he wished to wed beauty, movement, and life. This is why he was bored by the insipid Italian *opera seria*, so cold, so restricted, so grandiloquent. Soon after his arrival in Rome he wrote: "I am too old for everything except for what is true" (*Auch da hab' ich wieder gefühlt, dass ich für Alles zu alt bin, nur für's Wahre nicht*).

Hence his joy in *opera buffa*, the frank and unsullied outpouring of the Italian nature. His dream was to bring with him to Germany Moses' staff, which should call forth water from the rock. Mozart was able to do it. . . . But Mozart was unique and was soon to die. Ah, why did Goethe wait so long? Why did he not go to him at once? Why did he persist, for fifteen long years, in clinging to his Kayser and trying to shape him according to his

Italian. German now seemed to him a *barbarische Sprache* to set to music. Ah! had he only known twenty years ago what he knew today. He would have made a study of Italian so as to write for the lyric stage. He had another reason for his preference for Italian, and a singular one: the need he felt for the employment of a foreign language, Italian or Latin, to represent remarkable events on the stage, heroes in the throes of love, singing as they struggle and die (Letters of 1786). About this time he set Kayser to work on the music of *Egmont*, and wrote for him an opera the subject of which was taken from the recent story of Cagliostro, and the affair of the Queen's Necklace. His first sketch for the opera was in Italian.

¹After the old phrase *saltare comadum*, comedy having been meant to be "jumped," i.e., played with dancing and running.

will? Kayser was no doubt a worthy man, full of dignity, moral principles, even of religious renunciation,¹ a good musician and learned, but of sluggish blood—a shadow that melted away before the solar radiance of Goethe.²

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In 1789, Kayser definitely retired into his solitude at Zürich, which he never left again until his death in 1823. Goethe was faithful to his memory, and never forgot the sorrow Kayser's abdication caused him.

But this disastrous experience, although it lasted fifteen years, did not discourage him. No sooner did a new collaborator appear than Goethe at once resumed his great schemes for musical drama. This time he worked with Friedrich Reichardt of Königsberg, a brilliant and intelligent man, active, brimming with energy, inventiveness, warmth, and life—the very opposite of Kayser. Him Goethe never had to seek. Reichardt came and came again, he wrote and rewrote : he gave Goethe no peace.

Together with Johann Abraham Schulz, Reichardt had founded in Berlin the splendid *Lieder* school which in the course of thirty years blossomed over the whole of Germany. The principle of the school was that "the composer must declaim, in singing, the poet's words." Word and sound, phrase and melody, make one and the same body. These were indeed Goethe's own views.

Since 1780 Reichardt had been passionately fond of Goethe's poems, which he was always setting to music. Many of his inspirations were delightful; after a century and a half they have not lost their delicate perfume. He understood Goethe's artistic ideas and knew how to seize the exact inflection of his declamatory passages. In the same scene he would alternate, with the happiest results, instrumental interludes with the spoken word, pass on to the sung recitative and then to the aria, of which he varied the

¹One cannot over-emphasize the importance which Goethe invariably attached to moral qualities in the artists whose friendship he sought or accepted, though this has always been denied by his critics. He persisted in this attitude in spite of the artistic loss which it involved. It was not a reasoned choice; it was a vital instinct.

²Kayser produced in 1777 a collection of *Lieder* (*Gesänge mit Begleitung des Klaviers*), and Goethe also had his friend's *Lieder* published in several volumes. Bode reproduces some examples in his book on *Goethe and Music*. These *Lieder* display a certain lightness of touch, and their expression is apt and simple. The score of *Scherz, List und Rache* is in the Goethe National Museum at Weimar. Ferdinand Hiller and Max Friedlaender have spoken favorably of it.

rhythm and the expressive character. He begged Goethe to write an operatic *libretto*, and the poet, encouraged by him, conceived the idea of a lyric drama, the characters of which should be inspired by Ossian. He intended to incorporate in this work the Norse mythology and the Sagas. "I have already formed a plan, of which I will tell you when you come again."¹ One likes to imagine the Norns beginning to weave in the Olympian's brain the destinies of the *Wanderer* in Wagner's *Ring*. . . .²

He resumed at the same time the affair of the Queen's Necklace, and made of it a light opera in three acts, *Die Mystifizierten*.

In Venice he met his composer again, and Reichardt did not allow the promise of an opera to grow cold. But Goethe's interest had waned. At this time the demon of natural science was beginning to obsess him, and he had no longer any inclination for these things (*Kein Gemüt zu allem diesem Wesen*). However, Reichardt kept close to his heels, and so Goethe returned to Fingal and Ossian. But nothing was to come of it. An evil fate pursued both poet and composer.

Reichardt, whose sympathy with the French Revolution had made him impossible at the court of Berlin, lost his position as *Hofkapellmeister*, a post which gave him every opportunity of producing music-drama. And although Goethe had become, in 1791, *Oberdirektor* of the Weimar theatre, his provincial stage lacked the necessary equipment for such performances. He could not even perform his *Singspiele* there, nor had he any hope of having an opera performed on any other German stage. Now Goethe would never write a theatrical work *in abstracto*, without knowing beforehand the theatre, the actors, and the public for whom the work was intended. He therefore abandoned all idea of this work and buried himself in science (*Farbenlehre*, 1792). Besides this, the events of the time demanded imperiously that the "toga should yield to arms." He left for the campaign against France.³

¹End of 1789. Another project, the result of this same devotion to Gluck, which Reichardt shared with him, was a tragedy set to music with choruses in the old classical style, *Die Danaiden*. Goethe laid down the plan of this idea during the following ten years.

²We already find in the production of his *Proserpina*, in 1815, the three Norns, the three *Parcæ* (comp. Genast, p. 134).

³During the first period of his direction of the Weimar theatre he got Reichardt to write the music for his *Singspiele*, *Erwin*, *Claudine* and *Jery*. He had his *Cagliostro* played as a comedy in 1791, under the title of *Der Grosskophla*; he would have made an opera of it had not he lost all hope of seeing it put on the stage. We may add that he had converted his theatre at Weimar into a little model stage for operetta, and produced Italian *intermezzi* (short musical plays). He brought with him from Italy the text of twenty-three *opere buffe* by Cimarosa, Anfossi, and others, and translated several of them.

On his return, his friendship with Reichardt, the friend of France, the Jacobin, cooled considerably, and under the influence of Schiller became a distressing enmity after the year 1795.¹

Zelter took Reichardt's place. In 1796 he commenced his work on Goethe's *Lieder*. Their correspondence began in 1799, and from the very beginning of their friendship they found themselves in preëstablished sympathy. As early as 1798, Goethe said that Zelter's *Lieder* were "an absolute reproduction of the poetic intentions" (*eine radikale Reproduktion der poetischen Intentionen*).² In 1799 he wrote him, that while he had inspired melodies in Zelter, it was no less true that Zelter's melodies had inspired him to write more than one *Lied*. "I feel certain that if we were living together I would be in a more lyric mood than I am at present."

Had Goethe then, at the age of fifty, found at last his musical collaborator, of whom he had dreamt so often? No. He was only to meet new disappointments of which he never spoke; for Goethe never complained to others, and always buried his sorrows within himself. God knows he was not spared many!

There is no doubt that in Zelter he found his most faithful, affectionate, and devoted friend, a friend who, as it were, took root in him, derived from him all the joy of living, and died when Goethe died.³ No doubt, also, this composer became the most accurate interpreter of the ideas in Goethe's *Lieder*, so accurate that, as he told Goethe, "there was no need for him to search for

¹All the fault seems to have been Schiller's; he was quick-tempered and very easily upset. He persuaded Goethe into an insulting attack on Reichardt in his *Xenien*. Reichardt never lost his fine dignity, never for a moment considered that these affronts released him from the obligations of faithful service which he owed to the genius and the person of Goethe.

²In 1820 again Goethe wrote to Zelter, "I feel at once the identity of your compositions with my *Lieder*. The music is simply a lifting force, like the gas in a balloon. With other composers I have always to examine the music to see what view they have taken of the *Lied* and how they have dealt with it." It should therefore interest us deeply to know Zelter's *Lieder*, in order to realize exactly Goethe's feelings. For this reason I advise the reading of the fine *Lied* of the Harpist in *Wilhelm Meister*, "*Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt*." It is a model of noble, simple, and manly emotion.

³There are few stories more moving than the passing, almost at the same time, of the two friends. Goethe died on March 22nd. Zelter, who had written him yet another letter on that very day, lost in a moment his powers and joy of life. He aged ten years in a single day. With trembling lips he said, "I have lost what was dearest to me on earth" (*Ich habe mein Liebstes auf Erden verloren*). Again he said, "I am like a widow who has lost her man, her lord, the provider of her subsistence." Early in May he felt seriously ill. Going to his bedroom, he bowed his head gravely before Goethe's bust, and said, "Your Excellency naturally took precedence of me, but I shall follow you soon" (*Excellenz hatten natürlich den Vortritt, aber ich folge bald nach*). He took to his bed, and died on May 15th. Who shall say now that Goethe could not love and inspire love?

new melodies; all he had to do was to find those which were already in the poet's mind, unknown to him."¹

But Goethe's persistent dream, of creating in collaboration with a composer, great epic and dramatic works, Zelter failed to understand. It is possible that, realizing that he was incapable of carrying these schemes into effect, he merely pretended incomprehension. It was a perpetual misunderstanding. In 1799 Goethe sent Zelter his *First Walpurgis Night*, and indicated his intention of composing great dramatic ballads. Zelter, instead of taking advantage of the occasion, asked Goethe to write him an opera libretto. Some time before, Goethe had thought of writing a Greek tragedy with choruses, *The Danaïds*; but he abandoned all idea of it. Zelter's dramatic collaboration was limited to some incidental music for *Egmont* and *Götz von Berlichingen*, at Weimar. Some years later Zelter again asked for a text for an opera, and suggested as a subject *Hercules* or *Orpheus*. The idea of setting to music the first *Faust*, published in 1808, never occurred to him, this task being left to Prince Radziwill.² In vain did Goethe ask him to compose the music at least for some of the songs—for instance, the magnificent chorus of spirits, *Schwindet, ihr Dunkeln* ("Vanish, dark ones")—for the performance of some scenes from *Faust* at Weimar at the end of 1810. Zelter found some excuse for avoiding the task. Thus the unfortunate Goethe was compelled to have recourse to his willing musical factotum, Eberwein, the conductor of his little private choir, who as a composer was below mediocrity. Goethe at first tried him in his monodrama *Proserpina*, and in 1814 he discussed *Faust* with him. He went to the trouble of doing all the preparatory work: he shortened the first monologues, shortened the scene with Wagner, changed the whole beginning up to the end of the Easter chorus, *Euch ist der Meister nah, Euch ist er da* ("The Master is near you, he is here"), into a single scene in monologue, interrupted only by the apparition of the Spirit of Earth (*Erdgeist*), and the choruses. He stipulated that Faust's words should have a soft musical accompaniment,

¹The collection of Goethe's *Lieder*, composed by Zelter, was published in 1810-12, under the title of *Sämtliche Lieder, Balladen, und Romanzen*, in four volumes. Reichardt had preceded Zelter with his collection of *Goethe Lieder*, in four parts (1809).

²Prince Radziwill had been working at it since 1810. His *Faust*, fragments of which Goethe heard in 1811, was given in part (two big scenes) in May, 1819, before the court in a Berlin palace; a prince played Mephisto. The score was published in 1834-35 and the opera was performed over a period of twenty years. Reichardt's collection of *Goethe Lieder* (1809) included, among some remarkable *Deklamationsstücke*, a fragment of *Faust*: part of the dialogue between Faust and Gretchen in the garden.

Even quicker was Bettina, who, as early as January, 1808, was "drinking in" the Faust compositions. She wrote Marguerite's prayer, *Ach neige, du Schmerzerreiche*.

that the approach and apparition of the Spirit of Earth should be treated melodramatically, and that the Easter chorus should be melodious. Eberwein could not understand how music could be introduced into the piece. Goethe made patient efforts to explain the poem to him, induced him to feel the very pulse of the music, tried to make him realize the atmosphere of mystery which pervades Faust's magic laboratory when he opens the book of Nostradamus. Eberwein could not grasp it.¹ And Goethe gave it up (spring, 1815).

In the following year he formed the great project of which we have already spoken, the oratorio which should be a counterpart of the *Messiah*,² Zelter was to write the music, and it was to be given at the jubilee of the Reformation. But the realization of such a work soon proved to be hopeless. Zelter was utterly unable to cope with it. And again Goethe gave up (1816).³

How many times had Goethe to renounce his hopes! And there, close at hand, was Beethoven, who would have been only too glad to work with him and for him, to set *Faust* to music,⁴ and to write, at his dictation, a Handelian oratorio!

The last blow came in February, 1816, when he wished to present at his theatre in Weimar a play specially written to celebrate the German victory, *Des Epimenides Erwachen* ("The Awakening of Epimenides"); and the musicians, his musicians, scoffed at the work and at him! They had not even the decency to hide their contempt. Goethe was deeply hurt. He declared that from that day on he would never permit in Weimar the performance of any new music written for his poems. It was the end of forty years' laborious effort to wed his poetry to music on the stage. It was a complete and humiliating defeat.⁵

¹Fourteen years later (1828-29) Eberwein, at long last, understood. To celebrate Goethe's eightieth birthday he arranged a performance of a *Faust* with music; this was given from time to time up to 1870, and later. Bode quotes several fragments in his second volume, pp. 294-307. They have no great value.

²It is to be observed that he had just declined to write a *Samson* for Zelter. It was a wrathful refusal. He had no use, he said, for Jews on the stage, particularly for Samson with "the overwhelming and bestial passion of an immensely powerful God-gifted hero for the most accursed woman's flesh that the earth ever knew" (*die ganz bestialische Leidenschaft eines überkräftigen, gottbegabten Helden zu dem verfluchtesten Luder das die Erde trägt*). He knew nothing at that time of Handel's masterly picture of the sorceress.

³There were two other projects of the same period: a fragment of dialogue with chorus, *Der Löwenstuhl* (1814) which has a romantic coloring, and a Persian subject which the atmosphere of the *Divan* suggested to him, *Feradeddin and Kolaila* (1816).

⁴I have already noted that from October, 1808, Beethoven had been vainly searching for someone to adapt *Faust* for him.

⁵When his faithful comedian, Genast, took leave of him shortly before Goethe himself was compelled to resign, the latter sent him these two lines written on a drawing:

*Zur Erinnerung trüber Tage
Voll Bemühen, toller Plage*

("In memory of troublous days, days of sorrow, days of anguish.")

But if the theatre was denied him, if, tired and disappointed, he refused to visit it except on rare occasions, Goethe had still not given up his cherished dream; far from it, for he concentrated on it within himself, on the stage of his own thoughts. He created his own theatre, in perfect freedom, his own invisible opera, his great lyric drama. He gave us the second *Faust*.

There is no doubt of this; we are not putting forward a hypothesis; they are his own words. It was into this stream that Goethe poured all the overflow of poetry and music that had accumulated within him during a whole lifetime. He wanted the performance to have recourse to all the means of instrumental music, of song, of choruses, of operatic scenery. He boldly declared to Eckermann:¹

"The first part of *Faust* can only be entrusted to the greatest tragedians. Then in the operatic part (*im Teile der Oper*), the different characters must be in the hands of the finest singers. The rôle of Helen cannot be played by one artist; two great artists are required for this, for it is very rare that a singer is at the same time a tragedian of the first rank."

But where could a composer be found who combined, in accordance with Goethe's express wish, "the German nature with the Italian style" (*Welcher seine deutsche Natur mit der italienischen Art und Weise verbände*)? A second Mozart? . . . Goethe did not appear to be very anxious to find him. It seems as if his ambition to see the actual realization of this great work had diminished almost to the vanishing point. When Eckermann showed signs of impatience, he answered, calmly: "Let us wait² and see what the gods will send us in due time. Such things must not be hurried. The time will come when the significance of this work will become manifest to mankind, and when directors of theatres, poets, and composers will take advantage of it." He showed no interest in the result. He no longer desired to see the great work on the stage. In his mind he had already seen it.³ Thus ended the efforts of a whole lifetime to create a new type of theatre. Renunciation and withdrawal into himself were all that remained.

¹January 29, 1827. Eckermann seems to have found it odd that a piece "should begin as a tragedy and finish as an opera." Goethe replied: "Yes, it is so. But such is my will."

²N.B. He was eighty years old (1829).

³Here we must recall the remarkable spectacle of the aged dreamer as he appeared, ten days before his death, to Bettina's young son: "He now seems to belong to another world rather than to this; what passes here below is utterly lost to him in the visions of his imagination."

But the second Faust gained by this very fact a far greater value; it was the outcome and the combination of all the dreams of poetry and music which Goethe had amassed on the stage of his inmost self. How clear becomes this immense work, which baffled all the literary critics of the time and broke with all traditional forms! It is a universe in the first days of creation, when the Spirit moves upon the face of the waters, awaiting the coming light—the light of the second Goethe, the musician.¹

* * *

I do not wish, however, in writing thus, to convey the impression that the second *Faust* is, in my opinion, merely a gigantic libretto. A libretto is only half a poem. A work by Goethe, even when written for music, is in itself more than a poem. It already contains its music. As Goethe said in the words already quoted, *Nur nicht lesen, immer singen!* The poem is, in itself, a song, but it is much more besides: it is an orchestra. In *Faust*, Parts I and II, Goethe's work at times suggests the fantastic, fabulous instrumentation of the romantic epoch, the Wagnerian, and beyond.

Philip Spitta has described it well. Goethe, whose aging senses could not respond to the new music, to Beethoven, Schubert, and Weber, was nevertheless the creator of the poetical world which they painted in music. Poetically, he created a music which was even greater than theirs. No musical genius ever did, or ever will express in a *Lied* certain *Lieder* by Goethe, which contain within two lines infinitude; as for instance:

*Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh. . . .*

or

*Was . . . durch das Labyrinth der Brust
Wandelt in der Nacht. . . .*

"They are too musical to be set to music," said Spitta, profoundly. Only in instrumental music could the expression of such thought be attempted. But even then it would be merely their atmosphere, the magic globe—but an empty globe. Those mighty waves of light which lift the ocean of sound will always lack the precise word that holds them fast and sets its seal upon the Spirit.

¹Many musicians have tried their hand at *Faust*. But not one, not even Schumann, who attempted the final scene (in heaven), had the twofold genius of north and south upon which Goethe insisted and which he himself possessed.

Goethe created a *Sprechmusik* (music of speech). And he knew it. When he reigned over his little company of actors in Weimar he made them go through a very strict course of "musical speech." This was particularly the case at the beginning of the century, from 1800 to 1807, when he kept his company vigorously under his conductor's baton. This is no metaphor, for when conducting the rehearsals of plays he actually used a baton to indicate rhythm and tempo of speech. Like Schiller, Goethe was in arms against the naturalist school and held that tragedy should be modelled on opera. He conceived his company of actors as an orchestra, in which every player subordinates himself to the ensemble and plays his part punctiliously.

He made *Wilhelm Meister* express his ideas on this subject in his speech to the actors (*Lehrjahre*, IV, 2). "In a symphony no player would think of accompanying loudly another player's solo; each endeavours to play in accordance with the spirit and intentions of the composer, and to give a perfect rendering of the part entrusted to him, whether it be important or not. Should we not work with the same precision, with the same intelligence, we who cultivate an art far more subtly shaded than any kind of music, since we are called upon to portray, with taste and grace, what is both commonest and rarest in human life?"

Wilhelm, thanks to the duke's favour, was to his great delight, master of Philine and the theatrical company.* But this delight did not last long, for Philine became the duke's mistress and the actors covered him with ridicule. Nevertheless, he carried out his ideas. He conducted the actors as a *Kapellmeister* conducts his singers and his orchestra.¹ He insisted very strictly on his tempi, and his light and shade: *forte*, *piano*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*. In 1803 in order to put his ideas into definite form, Goethe wrote his *Rules for Actors* (*Regeln für Schauspieler*). In these he described declamation as a "prose-music"² (*eine prosa-*

*Translator's Note—Wilhelm Meister is really Goethe himself.

¹I might have added "choruses." One of the questions which occupied him most was that of the chorus in tragedy. The chorus had a powerful attraction for him both in Greek tragedy and in the compositions of Handel and Gluck, who seemed to him (rightly), the heirs of the great choral art of antiquity. He experimented with various possibilities in his poems set to music, and especially in the second *Faust*. The main problem was the practical realization, upon the stage, of these ideas. *The Bride of Messina*, at the Weimar Theatre, opened a field of experiment. Schiller had been content with the chorus in unison. The effect was pitiful, uninspired, and confusing. Goethe in the third act divided the singers into two choirs, using solos, duets, trios, and alternating choruses, with crescendos and decrescendos, with due regard to the registers of the different voices. (In the memoirs of Genast will be found some notes on his ingenious arrangements.)

²*Musik war sie zu nennen*, said Genast of the form of declamation on which he insisted. ("His declamation could have been described as music.")

ische Tonkunst). In the stage-director's copy of his *Bride of Messina*, as in an opera score, he marks the different musical shades of the declamation:

- Here, rustling softly (*Muss halblaut rauschend*).
 Here, clearer with more sound (*Muss heller, klingender*).
 Here, dully (*Muss dumpf*).
 Here, deep and awestruck (*Tief, schauerlich gesprochen werden*).
 Here, in a different tempo, much quicker (*Muss ein anderes, viel schnelleres Tempo gewählt werden*).

These indications, however, did not satisfy him. He wanted, like Beethoven and other musicians of his time, one of Maelzel's metronomes. For his "music-speech" school he compiled a whole table of meters in which the duration of each word and each pause was given. He even drew a diagram, giving in millimeters the value of every punctuation mark:



This fondness for rules and for typically German discipline threatened at times to kill his creative impulse. Under the poet we feel the drill sergeant. We might suppose that such a method would lead to the mechanical movements of a regiment that goes through its drills at a word of command.¹ But Anton Genast tells us that the great instructor imposed this automatic precision only upon beginners and little by little gave them free rein as they became masters of their instruments.² His actors, were not alone in being compelled to submit to the methods of an orchestra conductor. Goethe, the master-poet, himself submitted in his creations to the spirit of music. When his poetical genius had reached full maturity (1796-1806) he sometimes wrote down, before beginning the actual composition of a poem, in words which had neither sequence nor sense, the sound effects and the rhythm of the lines. When rhymesters reproached him for disregarding the traditional rules of meter and rhyme, he would reply:

¹He was accused of "playing chess with his actors."

²To all who are interested in the theatre I commend the recollections of Genast, *Aus Weimar's klassischer und nachklassisch Zeit: Erinnerungen eines alten Schauspielers*.

"Let me enjoy the music of it" (*Lass mich des Gesanges genießen*).

But this music was not musicians' music. Goethe aimed at creating a distinct music, personal to himself,¹ and he considered it superior to music without words. Having drunk his fill of ordinary music, the poet-king took up the sceptre, which he had never for a moment laid aside.

"The beauty of perfected human speech (*Rede*)," he told Knebel, "is far greater than that of song. There is nothing we can compare to it : its changes and variations (*Abwechslungen und Mannigfaltigkeiten*) in the expression of our feelings (*Gemüt*) are infinite in number.² Song must return to simple speech, when the greatest dramatic and emotional heights are to be attained. All the great composers have noticed this."

Music was never to him what it is to great composers, namely the means of perfecting speech. It is the poet's words which perfect music.

In this both composer and poet are right, if in each case genius is at work. For genius absorbs the whole of the inner world, the entire ego. The proportions of the elements it employs for its conception and self-expression may vary, but their sum total remains the same. A Goethe is a musician in poetry, just as a Beethoven is a poet in music.³ Those who are only musicians,

¹I have already emphasized the difference in this matter between Goethe and Schiller, who was too fond of "speaking in music" (or more exactly, "speaking to music")—that is, "melodrama." Goethe proclaimed the musical independence of the spoken word in poetry : with him this is an independent form of music with an existence of its own, carrying within itself its own orchestra and song.

²Goethe's declamation of poetry was in fact, around 1800, remarkable for light and shade. Pastor Ewald d'Offenbach wrote in 1799: "He could express anything he wished without raising or lowering his pitch beyond a few tones. This declamation was graded in infinitely small intervals. Between C and D it would have been possible to distinguish perhaps as many as sixteen fractional tones which could not have been expressed in musical notation. The declamation was characterized by the attack (or entry), the melody, the transition into another melody, and the return to the tone on which it had begun." (This sounds like a description of the first movement of a sonata of the time.)

But with age he lost this art or sacrificed it voluntarily to the "delight in sonority" (*seine Freude am Klange*). When he recited he was too fond of letting his fine bass voice resound and his production was "over-emphasized." This often met with criticism. He was better liked in his reading of comic passages, and Genast avers—who could have imagined it?—that he made an inimitable Falstaff. However, in conversation he always maintained a "soft and measured tone" (*leise und gemessen*). But he had too much vigour and force, not to say brutality, in his make-up. His expression and his acting were at times so violent that at a rehearsal of *King John*, the little actress playing opposite him fainted (Genast).

³Music in Goethe's poetry is a subject so vast and so profound that a whole book might be devoted to it. Perhaps some day I shall return to the matter. H. Abert in his little book has given it a short but effective chapter, *Das Musikalische in Goethe's Lyrik*. He shows how powerful was the influence in this direction which Herder exercised on the young Goethe at Strasbourg and how Goethe's genius forthwith evoked

those who are only poets, are but kinglets confined within their narrow realms. But Goethe and Beethoven rule, as emperors, the soul of the universe.

the melody which lay hidden in the heart of his poetic emotion. He calls attention to his free rhythm in verse and in prose (*Werther*), a stream of "infinite melody," as it were, to his veritable musical fantasies, to his great lyric monologues in musical drama with their *recitativi accompagnati*, their arias, and their torrential rhythm, as in the *Wanderer's Sturmlied*, *Schwager Kronos* and *Prometheus*. Then, under Italian influence, Goethe passes from the free recitative to the *arioso*.

Iphigenie marks the great divide, the pinnacle of perfection, where the impulsive Dionysian spirit is tamed to harmony by the hand of Apollo. On the further slope of life's mountain this inner music, like a river, returns to its bed. The torrent subsides, the stream ripples slowly, restrained by the banks which ordered will and understanding have erected; until, in the *Wanderjahre*, all that is left is a distant murmur, faintly echoed in the ramparts of the spirit.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF MUSIC

By GUIDO M. GATTI

ARTURO TOSCANINI, asked some time ago by a journalist why his interpretations of the classics were considered by the critics and audiences of every country as models of their kind, replied that this was because he scrupulously respects the form of these works, whereas most "conductors vie with one another in differentiating, so that people may speak of X's *Pastoral*, Y's *Eroica*, forgetting that the true author is Beethoven." The answer proves once more how modest and humble are artists of lofty powers and firm conscience in the face of masterpieces, and for this reason deserves to be quoted to the young and the vain. But at the same time it suggests a few considerations which may interest the reader and stimulate him to ponder the problem of musical interpretation, fundamental, we think, for musical criticism and judgments.

The words of Toscanini seem to lend support to the ambiguous and false conception generally entertained concerning interpretation (or execution, seeing that the two words are often used indifferently for one another) of music. Yet the interpretations Toscanini gives us of Beethoven, for example, are what they are inasmuch as the interpreter puts into them enough of himself to enable us to be present at a veritable artistic re-creation. It is true that Toscanini follows the text scrupulously and does not neglect or modify any of the graphic signs of which Beethoven made use—we do not know just how far, but we may safely say inadequately—to give expression to his artistic intuition; but it is the work done by his mind in the instant of reproduction which has paramount and indeed exclusive importance for us; and this work bears Toscanini's imprint, is born from his inmost spirit, is a fruit of his sensibility, of his meditations, of all his faculties, concentrated on the single effort to create anew the spirit of the artist Beethoven, at the moment when he expressed the *Pastorale* or the *Eroica*. This task of the interpreter is translated in the accents, in the melodic phrasing, in the establishing of a tempo, in the alternation—at times scarcely perceptible to the ear of the listener—of *rallentando* and *affrettando* which are, as it were, the beating rhythm of a heart, in the dynamics of phonic effects, in the equilibrium of the instruments, and in a thousand other details which it would be long and useless to enumerate

and wrong to qualify as "technical," since it is through them that the æsthetic conception (that is, the theoretic act *par excellence*) is expressed.

But then, some one will ask, if the interpreter is great as his artistic possibilities are great—concerning which there can be no shadow of a doubt—and if the result of his interpretative work is the more apparent, the more he reveals in it of his own personality or the more he transfuses into it of his own feelings, what then remains of the written work, the work of the creator? When we listen to, and quite rightly admire, the interpretation of Beethoven offered us by a Busch, of Chopin by a Cortot, is it Beethoven and Chopin or rather Busch and Cortot who shackle our attention, who seize us and fill us with enthusiasm? *Artifex additus artificii*, or *traduttore traditore*? (Is artist added to artist, or is the translator traitor?)

If a pianist, say, plays a sonata by Beethoven with such mechanical precision as to reproduce accurately the text of that sonata, dividing the notes in exact accordance with the written signs, giving to each one of them the length and the intensity indicated, in such a way that the value of one half-note does not vary even by the fraction of a second from that of another half-note in the same part of the composition, preserving the same rapidity of execution, the same *tempo* indicated by the metronome or by a certain time-direction for that entire portion of the sonata between one direction and the next—in short, if he succeeds in giving us *in sounds* a perfect photograph of what the printed page is *in signs*, we say without more ado that this is not an interpretation, that a machine without a soul could have achieved the same result, or even a more perfect result so far as concerns mechanical reproduction, and that if the soul of the artist does not live in the execution, he has not given us the sonata of Beethoven: the spirit of the great musician was completely absent and no emotion was aroused in us by all those notes, chords, rhythms, void of artistic content.

Vice-versa, if we listen to a true and great interpreter, we feel ourselves at once carried away by the spell that emanates from those sounds—the same, apparently, as those played in the performance of which we have just spoken, but which strike us now as though they grew alive and coloured, vibrated and spoke to us, awakened in our hearts other voices and echoes and resonances without end, in a world which suddenly seems to have grown infinite in comparison with that of a brief while ago. What has happened? Simply this: the interpreter—let us say Ferruccio

Busoni, a very great artist—has given us a true interpretation of Beethoven's sonata, has caused to relive in us the world closed and frozen between those black signs, has, in short, created an artistic reality which has stirred us. (It is useless to say a *new reality*, because one can create only things that did not exist before.)

But did not the work of art, the artistic reality, exist before this execution? Was it not, then, that very sonata of Beethoven which has come down to us fixed on those pages and which posterity will hand on, without any danger of its vanishing in the course of centuries? How much was there of Beethoven in the performance and how much of Busoni? Some people, indeed, in speaking of Busoni's interpretations, used to say with a gesture of contempt that scarcely anything of Beethoven remained and what we listened to was mere Busoni, thinking that thus they were formulating the most terrific accusation of the Italian pianist. Others, more prudent, shook their heads and declared that the interpreter had taken a few liberties with the composition. But none of these persons, if asked, would have been able to say with precision what he meant by the "authentic interpretation" of Beethoven in comparison with which that of Busoni was censurable. At most he might have mentioned the interpretations of contemporary or earlier pianists, as being, indeed, true to the original: those, perhaps, of Martucci or Paderewski, of Schnabel or Backhaus, so many other artistic re-creations of Beethoven's pages, which for this very reason were susceptible of the same accusation of inauthenticity on the part of other listeners and from other points of view.

But at bottom the state of mind of the artistically sensitive listener, who is not dominated by any intellectual prejudices, has always been that which De Schloezer characterised in the following passage:

According to the impression conveyed—and if the interpreter, thanks to the power of his playing, thanks to his technical perfection, thanks, besides, to a multitude of imponderable elements, succeeds in dominating his listeners and in persuading them—the trick is done. The next day, this same audience will, with the same enthusiasm, applaud an utterly different interpretation, if the second virtuoso succeeds, in his turn, in subjugating it. His interpretation, deemed as living and rigorously logical as that of his rival, will be pronounced equally truthful.

It is logical to conclude that since there may be infinite interpretations of Beethoven (theoretically, at least, considering the number of artists who have performed, are performing, or

will perform his music), what we possess, even in the autograph manuscript, is really not the work of art of the German master, but something which in a certain sense is already a reproduction: which is, from one point of view (on a theoretical plane) a re-creation, an interpretation of the author at the very instant when he was communicating his intuitive expression and was setting it down physically; and from the other point of view an imperfect interpretation because musical notation is inadequate and the musical idea, in its multiplicity and its simultaneity, can only be approximated on paper (more roughly even than is generally believed). This conclusion may seem paradoxical, but, strictly speaking, it is inevitable: what has come down to us of a sonata by Beethoven is not the artistic reality created by Beethoven but a potentiality, and therefore it does not exist outside of the execution, which is the sole concrete artistic fact. Its only reality lies in the interpreter's reproduction, in those sounds which, through our sense of hearing, are able to excite our sensibility and to speak to our souls. Landry writes:¹

It is obvious what an essential difference separates the musical work, *which lives only in duration, that is, in our consciousness*, from the plastic work, *which exists in space*; the plastic work is the Parthenon, what one calls the musical work is the plan of the Parthenon drawn to scale, a plan so precise and exact that a builder familiar with the tradition can, without any further data, construct the edifice.

And even before him Paul Valéry had asserted that a poem has only a potential existence and becomes real only when it is recited:

A poem, like a piece of music, offers in itself nothing but a text, which is, strictly, only a sort of recipe; the cook who executes it has an essential rôle. To speak of a poem in itself, to judge of a poem in itself, has no real and precise meaning, is simply to speak of a possibility.

More recently Luigi Pirandello in his comedy *Questa sera si recita a soggetto*² puts into the mouth of the *deus-ex-machina*, Dr. Hinkfuss: "... what you criticise in the theatre is never the writer's work, but this or that scenic creation which has been based on it, the one quite different from the other; many, whereas it is one. . . . The only thing would be for the work to perform itself, no longer with actors, but with its own characters putting on, by a miracle, voice and body. In that case, indeed, a direct judgment would be feasible in the theatre. But is such a miracle ever possible? So far no one has experienced it. There is a man who, with more or less ardor, endeavors to accomplish it every evening with his actors: the stage-manager." And further on: "If a work of art survives that is only because we are able

¹Lionel Landry, *La sensibilité musicale*, Paris, Alcan, 1927.

²*Figaro Littéraire*, June 5, 1926.

still to budge it from its rigid form, dissolve its form inside of us in vital movement; and it is we, then, who give it life, different from one moment to another, and varying with each one of us—so many lives, not one; as can be seen from the continuous discussions about it, which rise from men's reluctance to believe this very thing: that it is we who give this life; so that what I give cannot conceivably be the same as what another gives. . . ." It is the same vexing problem of reproductive execution, in another field but with the same characters and with the same demands.

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Granted, then, that the page charged with black signs which the interpreter has before him on his stand is nothing but an imperfect communication of the creative artist's idea, what is his task, what are his rights as artist and interpreter, and what are his duties? (It goes without saying that we are dealing here with an interpreter gifted with the loftiest natural qualities of taste, culture, adequate technical preparation—in short, an ideal interpreter.)

On first consideration, it would seem that the rights cannot be reconciled with the duties: whereas on one side the artist has the right to express untrammelled what he feels, on the other he has the duty not to stray from the sign that guides him and to remain duly devout before the words of the creator: a pure and simple link between him and the audience. But on re-examining the problem and keeping in mind the considerations set forth above, a way out presents itself; or, if not a way, at least a loop-hole, and that is better than nothing.

We have spoken of the imperfection of musical notation; but is it not legitimate to suppose that not all the possibilities contained in the intuition-expression¹ of the creative artist have been realised by him, set down on the page, and that these possibilities (the more numerous, theoretically, the loftier and the stronger his inspiration) form precisely what the interpreter has the duty and the right of communicating to the listener, of rendering evident, of materialising, so to speak, in sound? In this curve, imperfectly drawn by the hand of the composer, is it not the interpreter who can and shall make those interpolations which will make it appear perfect?

¹*Intuition-expression.* The translator has made no attempt to render this term in any more comprehensible fashion. The aesthetics of this article are based on the article by Benedetto Croce for the 14th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on *Æsthetics* (v. I, p. 263-272), in which the same expression is used throughout. The identity of intuition and expression are at the basis of all Crocean æsthetic doctrines. Intuition is the moment of artistic conception, expression that of creation; and the two are to all purposes identical and indistinguishable.

And since these possibilities are so numerous as to seem infinite, we get interpretations differing with different interpreters, and differing in the same interpreter with the passing of time. For differences of temperament, taste, state of mind at the moment of execution, will influence the direction and the quality of the individual artist's decisions. And one sole work will give us classicist and romantic interpretations, those in which linear elements predominate and those in which the design will be vague and nebulous; and those richer in pathos and those poorer, according to the greater or lesser wealth of harmonies, so to speak, which the page will have awakened in the interpreter.

Therefore the interpreter's rôle is neither translation, as has been suggested, nor criticism. Not translation because in this "there is a basis which already has its fixed historical existence, its compact solidity of form already crystallised for eternity" in such a way that "the fact of the translation must be, logically, removed from the sheer category of æsthetic elements."¹ Not criticism, because musical interpretation limits itself to obtaining imaginative reproduction (a primary and indispensable condition of criticism, but not sufficient) and does not become history. In the moment of execution nothing remains but the æsthetic factor. The interpreter may have made use—and indeed it will have profited him to do so—of all the historical knowledge of which he disposes; he may have investigated the world in which the author lived and the work of art was born; he may have, indeed he should have, made a profound study of its style, brought home to himself the reasons for this or that characteristic; but, if he is an artist, in the act of reproduction he will be present only with his æsthetic soul. All historical learning will be no more than "the logs burning in the fire of imagination" (Croce).

Not translation and not criticism, but re-creation of the work of art, which demands to be judged by the same gauge as what is commonly called artistic creation. Pizzetti, who, pure creator that he is, can certainly not be suspected of exaggerated weakness towards performers, once hinted at this new conception of creation in interpretative activity,² but afterwards did not see his way to following it to its extreme consequences, and retreated behind a double process of artistic creation, by which "if it is true that the interpreter endows with life and evidence, that is, re-creates through his own powers an expression which without his re-creative activity would remain mute, it is no less true that the power of

¹G. Bastianelli, *L'opera ed altri saggi di teoria musicale*. Firenze, 1921. p. 115.

²In the review *Pègaso* (Firenze, Lemonnier, June, 1929).

the interpreter would remain sterile—and so might just as well not exist at all—if there were no works to interpret; and it is equally true that when an expression has been noted down, written (when in short, it *is*) it exists through its own force. . . .” To which last affirmation it may be objected that there is not, cannot be, an expression, a work of art—of which we have merely the notation, and a mute notation to boot. To speak of a before and an after—not on a chronological plane but, one might say, in hierarchical order—of cause and effect (as Pizzetti does), strikes us as a desire arbitrarily to separate two elements which, æsthetically, either are one or tend to become one, to confuse themselves, at any rate, with one another, to cover one another perfectly.

In his recent *Æsthetica in nuce*,¹ Benedetto Croce has clearly distinguished between communication (“which concerns the fixing of the intuition-expression to an object which we may call material or physical by metaphor”) and the image or its expression. And, referring to all the arts (that is, to art, pure and simple), he has written: “The process of communication or preservation and divulgation of artistic images, guided by technique, produces material objects which are metaphorically styled ‘artistic’ and ‘works of art’: pictures and sculptures and buildings, and then also, in a more complicated fashion, literary and musical writings, and, in our times, gramophones and gramophone-records, which make it possible to reproduce voices and sounds. But neither these voices and sounds, nor the signs of painting, sculpture, and architecture are works of art, which exist nowhere outside of the souls who create them and re-create them.” Clear as Croce’s discourse is, it becomes yet more palpable—even without considering the strict logic which led the philosopher to this enunciation that may seem, to some, a paradox—if one recalls the particular conditions in which the intuition-expression of the creative musician is communicated to us: the material, physical objects, of which Croce speaks, are, for music and poetry, symbolical signs, mute in themselves as far as our senses are concerned, capable of awaking artistic emotions only when reproduced, actuated, re-created. The silent reading of a page of music, it goes without saying, is also the equivalent of an interpretation.

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But, you will ask, should a free hand be left to the caprice of the executants? How many will be scrupulous, and how many

¹For private distribution only, Naples, 1929. This is the (later) Italian version of the article alluded to above, p. 199.

will not be delighted to "efface" the composer, defying the law or even with its tacit suggestion? This desire, which in practical reality is more than legitimate, united with that of fully safeguarding—on the theoretical plane—the unity and indivisibility of the work of art, has inspired the pure *crociani*, and among them Parente, who wrote:¹ "To distinguish in a page of music the technique from the interpretation is like distinguishing in a picture the fundamental features of the design from the minor ones and from the accurate nuances and gradations of shade, assigning to the first the function of pure material support of the whole, to the second the entire expressive vitality; whereas it is quite easy to understand that there is no element in a picture which does not form part of its entire life and which is not one of its conditions. In just the same fashion (and in spite of that finer and almost imponderable character of the so-called interpretative elements, which tempt one to attribute to them the truly human and expressive part) the humanity and the expressivity of a musical piece is always and only the result of the totality of the actual notes, their material inertia, just as of every infinitesimal, evanescent fragment of it.

"The composer jots down on paper both the succession and the simultaneity of the notes in their possible relations, and the words *adagio*, *forte*, *pianissimo*, *vibrato*, *dolce* and so forth; each one of these notes, each one of these signs has its peculiar importance and is essential, and all, moreover, contribute to the consistency of the whole. This will have artistic value if these signs, taken together, have the power to awaken in us—and if we are disposed to permit to be awakened in us—a lyric emotion; its value will be mechanical and purely material if they were born without life or if we do not succeed in awaking the life they hold.

"The greater or lesser difficulty presented to the performer by the so-called interpretation in comparison with the so-called technique, cannot be an essential motive for distinguishing between the two, especially because it is not denied that it may be easier for a student to apply the rules of interpretation than to satisfy the irksome exigencies of technique; whereas it is certain that musicians who are absolutely capable of translating the signs of interpretation but lack technical ability and drop notes or touch one string instead of another, or amplify or restrict *tempi* in respect to the proportions assigned, and so on, waste away the vitality of the work performed, which should be the exact result of the complete use of all the means indicated by the composer.

¹Alfredo Parente, *Critica e storiografia musicale: premesse metodologiche*, in *La Rassegna Musicale* (Torino, September, 1930).

"At any rate, the argument that cuts short all discussion is that in a work of art it is not possible to distinguish between artistic and non-artistic elements, and that the artistic, lyrically emotional value is not superimposed upon or supererogatory to the material consistency of the physical signs of which it is composed, but is precisely these physical signs and can only result from them."

This reasoning is unanswerable—except that once more the comparison with figurative art does not enhance the precision of terms, for the reasons set forth above; and it would have been more opportune to adduce the text of a literary work of art, in which the printed (or written) words are mere symbols to be interpreted, and suggest the images of which the work of art will consist. A fool who mechanically read a poem without understanding it would not convey to himself or to his listeners an impression different from that made by a masterly instrumentalist void of musical intelligence, who played with indifferent precision the notes of a musical composition. You cannot re-create an artistic reality, a lyrical actuality, without the presence of the spirit, indeed without its domination. Parente's conclusion is as edifying as it is precise: "The task of a translator cannot lie in the ability faithfully to translate the writing of the score into sonorous reality . . . we believe that it is truly a question of skill, patience, good will, and, in all cases, of absolute passivity, of complete absence of inner life on the part of whoever performs the copy (of a figurative work of art). If he in any way alters—whether for good or for bad makes no difference—the works which he wishes to present to us, he exceeds his duty; that is to say, he has let his imagination, his artistic activity, get to work, and what he has offered us is a new work of art. . . ."¹ Indeed, a similar legal clause ought to pronounce perfect the performances of a machine capable of transcribing *in sound* the written musical signs, capable of registering on the hard-rubber of the record all the notes, one after the other, with their pitch, duration, intensity, etc.

It is obvious that Parente's position goes to one extreme, whereas ours endeavours to reconcile the demands of technique (or better, of the musical writing which has helped to determine the author's idea) and of artistic interpretation, of matter and of spirit, of something that is dead in the symbolic signs of the musical page and something that is alive in the spirit of whoever reproduces the work of art, either by performing it or by listening to it.

(Translated by Henry Furst)

¹Loc. cit., p. 380-381.

VERDI AND SCHILLER

By ELSA BIENENFELD

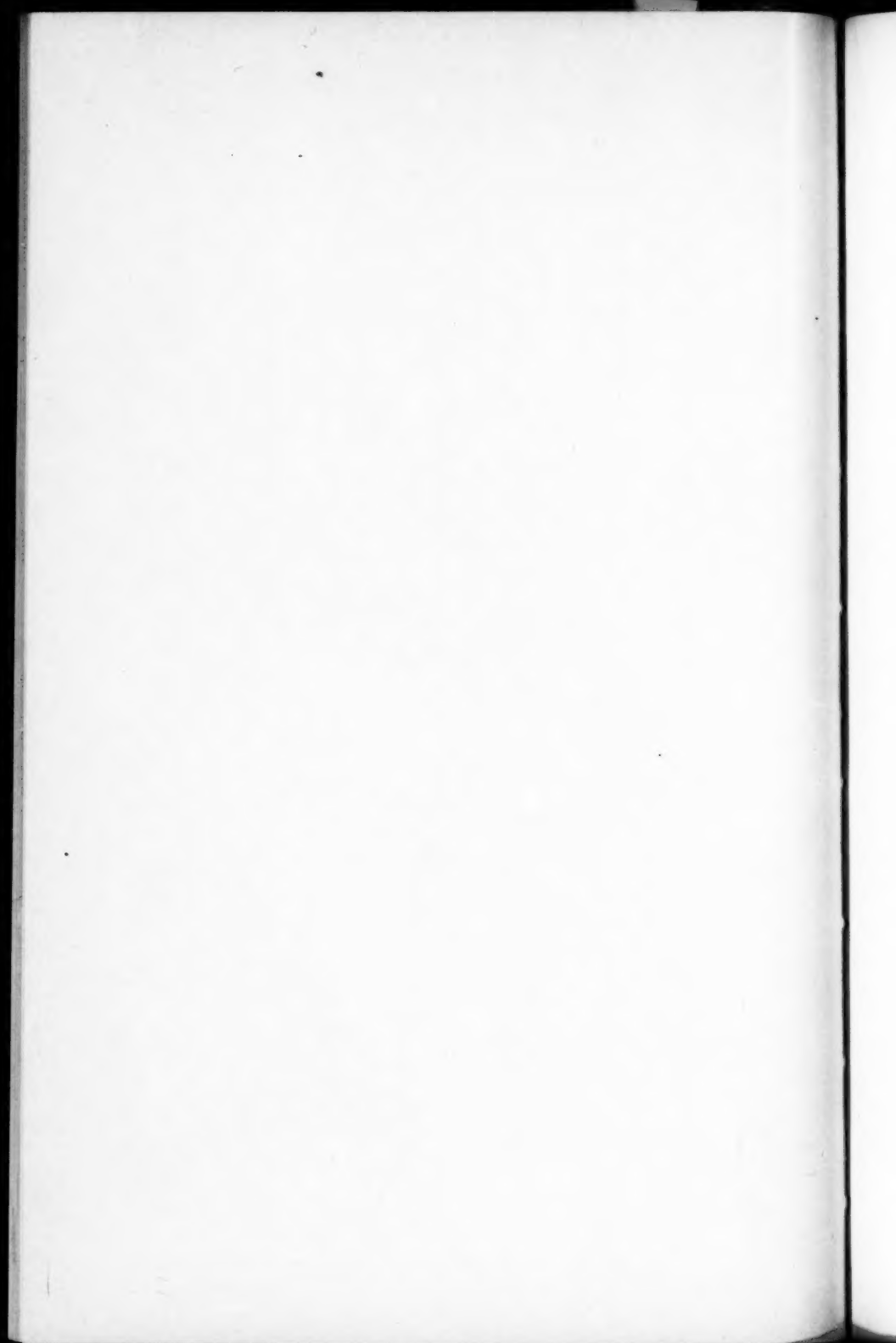
VERDI set no fewer than four of Schiller's dramas to music, and derived inspiration from a fifth. Next to Shakespeare, whom he considered a dramatist above all things, and the greatest of all, he valued Schiller—especially in earlier years—as a representative of dramatic genius and proficiency. He knew Schiller's dramas through the translations of his friend, Count Maffei, a fine scholar, to whom his countrymen owe, besides, the Italian versions of Shakespeare's, Byron's, and Bulwer's works.

The first of Schiller's dramas that Verdi came upon was "The Maid of Orleans." He began composing music for it after the successes of *Ernani* and *I Lombardi*, when he again received a commission for the Carnival season of La Scala in Milan. It was his seventh opera. The author of the libretto was Bolera, a highly gifted Bohemian who had himself experienced the fate of Karl Moor; he had been educated as an Italian in the Vienna Theresianum only to become politically suspect and be imprisoned for years in a fortress from which he escaped into Hungary. Schiller's "Jungfrau" underwent a strange transformation in its conversion into the book of *Giovanna d'Arco*. The Maid of Orleans appears in a less idealistic light than in Schiller's play, and takes over many realistic traits from Voltaire's "Pucelle." Everyone is in love with her, even the king; she is sold by her father to the English; and finally dies, not at the stake but on the battlefield, where endless flights of angels and demons soar down upon a long column of soldiery—which affords opportunity for an effective choral finale. This last scene is the only one in the entire opera where Verdi's musical and theatrical talents found free development. In all its other sections the opera is weaker than *Ernani*. The première had only a *succès d'estime* (Feb. 15, 1845). The beautiful singer Frezzolini was greatly admired as the Maid; angelic of mien, with radiant eyes and a voice of velvety softness, she seemed the incarnation of fervent belief. A year later the work was produced in the Fenice theatre in Venice, and Verdi, with his wonted severe and inflexible self-criticism, then admitted that it made but an indifferent impression. Of the whole score nothing has survived but the overture, which Verdi afterwards used twice again, for *I Vespri siciliani* and for *Aroldo*. Of interest is a trick of censorship in connection with the first performance



Giuseppe Verdi

(From a photograph inscribed to Gustave Schirmer, Sr.)



of *Giovanna d'Arco* at Palermo. The censor regarded as objectionable a stage-work in which the French populace is incited to throw off the foreign yoke and such words as "liberty" and "fatherland" occur. So the libretto had to be radically revised: the French Maid of Orleans was transformed into a compatriot of Sappho, being done into Greek as *Orietta di Lesbo*.

Some years later Verdi, following his inclination for catastrophic subjects, attacked Schiller's "Robbers." The English impresario Lumley invited him to write an opera for Her Majesty's Theatre, and recommended three subjects for his choice: "Cain," "King Lear," or "The Robbers." Thenceforward Verdi, though he had then chosen "The Robbers," bore in mind for years the idea of composing a *Lear*. With Piave he blocked out the entire scenario and made sketches, but in after-years he tore up the whole work—just as Franz Werfel describes it in his great Verdi novel. However, when Verdi decided on "The Robbers," he imposed the condition that the libretto should not be written by a professional librettist, but drawn by some poet after Schiller's work. It was Count Maffei himself who wrote the libretto, which really satisfies high literary demands. As an adept in stagecraft, Verdi proposed certain changes in the second act, though with some hesitation for fear of wounding Maffei's artistic sensibilities. Yet hardly one of Verdi's earlier operas failed so utterly as this carefully prepared version of "The Robbers," which, as *I Masnadieri*, was first performed on July 22, 1847, in London, and only twice repeated. The work was brusquely rejected; some declared that it proved Verdi incapable of even a single melody. But it was no more lacking in melody than Verdi's other operas; on the contrary, its weaknesses are occasioned by melodic redundancy. When *I Masnadieri* came to Paris and the fifty-three-year-old Lablache, with all his amplitude of girth and reassuring obesity, stepped out of the starving-tower as Father Moor, a gale of laughter swept away the serious effect intended.

Verdi's third Schiller-opera was the fifteenth of his thirty. After he had become popular, with *La Battaglia di Legnano*, as the composer of the Revolution (even his name, V E R D I, had taken the place of the forbidden rallying-cry "Viva Emmanuele Re D' Italia") he set his heart upon composing another opera that should be, while likewise politically inspired, of greater artistic value. To Cammerano, who was then his librettist (the same who afterwards furnished the book for *Il Trovatore*), he wrote that he wanted "a short, but interesting drama full of movement and passion." Cammerano proposed Schiller's "Kabale und

Liebe," which they brought out as *Luisa Miller*. In this play Verdi was particularly attracted by the relation between father and daughter; the father's love for his child and the child's for her father, one of Verdi's favorite themes, finds thrilling expression in the scene between Father Miller and his daughter Luisa. This scene is an inspired sketch for the celebrated stretta in *Rigoletto*, the scene between Germont and his son Alfred in *La Traviata*, the great duet of recognition in *Simone Boccanegra*, and the duet between Amonasro and Aida. *Luisa Miller* makes, on the whole, the impression of a pencil-sketch for the far more powerful and richly colored *Traviata*. The score was penned at Paris in 1849, during a cholera epidemic, although the opera had been engaged for Naples. Before Verdi reached Naples, the finished work in his pocket, the Teatro San Carlo went bankrupt; the impresario refused to pay the honorarium, and invoked the support of the political authorities; the chief of police tried to force Verdi to cede the control over his opera, but Verdi stood no nonsense, and the impresario, scared to death by his towering rage, paid the wrathful composer his three thousand ducats on the spot. The première took place on Dec. 8, 1849. The reception was friendly; but the opera was repeated only eight times. The brilliant triad of *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Traviata*, soon caused *Luisa Miller* to be forgotten.¹

The Verdi opera in which a Doge Fiesco plays a leading part, and which is therefore sometimes associated with Schiller's "Fiesco" tragedy, is *Simone Boccanegra*. But it has little to do with Schiller's drama. Its source was a play by Gutzlietz, at that time Spanish Consul in Genoa and the author of numerous theatrical pieces, one of which was the basis for the libretto of *Il Trovatore* and another for that of *La Forza del Destino*. Simone Boccanegra is a real historical figure. He was Doge of Genoa in the thirteenth century, before the government was taken over by that tragic Fiesco who is the hero of Schiller's drama. Verdi composed the opera in 1857; in its original shape it failed to please (Venice, March 12, 1857) and Verdi let it lie, as he had immediately after finishing it started on the composition of *Un Ballo in maschera*. But when, twenty years later, on his way through Cologne, he spent an evening in the theatre where Schiller's "Fiesco" was being given, this work of the German poet whom he so revered made such a profound impression on him that he bitterly regretted not having taken it as the groundwork for his tragedy; and his imagination had been so powerfully stirred that the desire awoke in him to

¹But it has recently been revived. Cf. p. 209.

make his own *Simone Boccanegra* emulate Schiller's tragedy in dramatic depth and intensity. As his librettist Piave, who had written the book of *Simone Boccanegra*, was dangerously ill, Verdi applied to Arrigo Boito, who completely recast the second act of the originally four-act opera and enriched it with interesting episodes. In this second version *Simone Boccanegra*—after the sensational success of *Aïda* and shortly before the completion of *Otello*—was produced at La Scala on March 24, 1881, with great, but ephemeral, success. Not until the present day has this glorious opera come into its own—thanks to Werfel's persistent propaganda—in opera repertory, as a most vivid and effective work which, with its gloomy, tragic coloring is one of the greatest and most individual of Verdi's creations.

The fourth drama of Schiller with which Verdi occupied himself, and which served him as basis for an opera, was "Don Carlos." It came in question on two occasions. Engaged to write a festival opera for the Paris Exposition of 1855, he had already decided on "Don Carlos"; but Scribe's influence so swayed the commission in favor of his libretto of *Il Duca dell' Alba* (already composed by Donizetti, but left unfinished), that pressure was brought to bear on Verdi and he was forced to decide on the composition of Scribe's not at all sympathetic libretto. This book dealt with the battles between the Italians and the French, reason enough for Verdi, the impassioned patriot, to be disinclined to write music for it. Under the title of *Les Vêpres siciliennes* this opera was brought out in Paris on June 13, 1855. Eleven years later, when Verdi was again requested to write a French opera, he decided to realize his long-cherished idea of taking Schiller's Don Carlos as his hero. The text, by the French librettists Camille Du Locle and François Méry, had five acts, and the style of composition was to be that of the French grand opera. Inquisition and auto-da-fé were put to use in spectacular tableaux. But the musical gem of the opera was the Friendship Duet between Marquis Posa and Don Carlos. The premiere of *Don Carlos*, staged with all imaginable pomp, took place on March 11, 1867. The Imperial Family was present, and all Paris; the success of the piece was noisy, but not genuine. Only in Italy, after a masterly production in Bologna, was *Don Carlos* finally recognized as a masterpiece, and since then it has held its place on Italian stages. Outside of Italy it appears but seldom; it, too, is awaiting rebirth. We may add that Verdi, fifteen years after the Paris production, again subjected *Don Carlos* to a thorough overhauling, reducing the five acts to four. He admitted that "this was a long and laborious task."

Verdi's decisive victories were not won with the operas based on Schiller's dramas. But the fact and the manner of his striving after lofty ideas and true poetry—in contrast with other Italian opera-composers, who contented themselves with librettos made after the conventional pattern—are characteristic of Verdi's artistic heroism. From this source sprang his potency as a dramatist in opera.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

VERDI AND MANZONI

By ALBERT MAECKLENBURG

WE are at present in the midst of a Verdi revival. Among musicians and the general public there are very many who welcome this fact as a gratifying sign that the sense of the meaning of melody and the understanding for truly dramatic operatic art are not yet wholly extinct.

In September, 1928, the Municipal Opera of Berlin brought out *Don Carlos*. In Halle there has been given, under the supervision of Dr. R. Franz (the editor of the German edition of this opera, who has already brought Verdi's *I Masnadieri* back to life) a performance of *I due Foscari* (after Byron). On the stage of the great Württemberg State Theatre in Stuttgart, under General Manager Albert Kehm, there took place on Nov. 27, 1929, the German première of one of Verdi's most important works from the period of *Il Trovatore*, the five-act opera *I Vespri Siciliani* (composed in 1855 and translated into German by Gian Bindi from the Italian and French versions.)¹

The Requiem, here and there, attracts devout auditors.² Anyone who scans Verdi's biography at this period, as presented by Weissmann, Werfel, Monaldi, or Perinello, will find himself especially aware of the subtle spiritual affinity between Verdi and Italy's national poet, Manzoni, an affinity not lacking in a certain element of sentimentality.

As a youth Verdi was already possessed by a fervent longing to know Manzoni personally. With the profoundest reverence he followed the course of this bright particular star of poesy from its rising to its culmination and final eclipse. His unbounded veneration for the author of *I promessi sposi* finds most ardent expression in a letter to his friend Countess Clarina Maffei (1867). Until that year it had not been granted him to enter into personal relations with Manzoni, whose genius, soaring on mighty pinions through the heaven of poetry, and so akin to his own, he had worshipped from afar. "Would that I might kneel before him," he writes. "How I envy my wife [Giuseppina, née Strepponi] that she has seen this great man." He was filled

¹*Luisa Miller* was revived last season by the Metropolitan Opera in New York and has been performed this year also.

²It has just been performed in New York by the Philharmonic Symphony and Schola Cantorum under Toscanini's baton (January 15, 1931).

with secret sorrow that he had not yet been able to approach this "lofty spirit" and enrich himself by the contact. To introduce himself he did not "dare"—an expression showing the modesty with which Verdi, who was well aware of his own musical abilities, recognized Manzoni's superiority as a poet. He indulges in the most extravagant praises of the man who was "the greatest poet of our epoch" and had written "one of the greatest of books" (referring to *I promessi sposi*). He feels that he is belittling the worth of this poem by styling it an epoch-making "book"; he calls it "a solace for mankind." He finds it as "true" as truth itself; he sets it alongside the operas of his time as a standard, and exclaims emphatically that if artists could comprehend this "truth," there would be neither veristic nor idealistic, but only "true" musicians. Verdi thus shows his recognition of Manzoni's international significance. At the age of sixteen he read *I promessi sposi* for the first time; in later years, with increased keenness of discrimination, he retracted the impulsively eulogistic judgment pronounced in youthful ardor on many a monumental literary work, but for Manzoni's works he always retained the unwavering affection of inmost conviction.

Not until May, 1868, was the desire of Verdi's heart to be fulfilled. In the salon of Clarina Maffei, née Countess Carrara, where the most prominent leaders in the world of art and literature met freely, he was introduced to Manzoni. Verdi had then reached the zenith of his renown. The entire world paid him homage; during more than a decade the stellar triad of *Rigoletto* (1851), *La Traviata* (1853), and *Il Trovatore* (1853), had cast its scintillating radiance far beyond the horizon of his native land. Manzoni himself could not remain insensible to the profoundly ethical and genuinely dramatic traits of his works, to the realism of human emotion that finds such thrilling expression in them, although he had no understanding of the specifically musical factors whereby these indescribable effects were achieved. He shared in the worldwide admiration of Verdi's genius. So it might be supposed that this mutual "adoration" would also have led to a warm fraternal association. But, strangely enough, in the turmoil of life it is the unexpected that happens. To be sure, there subsisted between Verdi and Manzoni, from 1868 until the death of the latter, a friendly, even cordial, relationship; but an intimate affiliation of these two geniuses, such as would have united the currents of their lives, was never realized. Was there, despite all affinity in mental disposition, despite their ideal aims, a difference in the mould of their characters, in their habits of life? None whatever.

Lofty souls love solitude. Verdi, like the "peasant" he called himself, remained rooted in his native soil of Santa Agata. Herein lay the wellspring of his power. Manzoni, though he received the visit of their mutual friend Clarina Maffei every Sunday at his home, likewise held aloof from the commotion of public life, that he might yield himself undisturbed to the inspiration of his genius. But even if their public activity seldom brought them into contact, this did not prevent them from learning to love and understand each other. Their common fondness for revelling in their peculiar realms of fancy, for a lofty isolation remote from all striving after the perishable laurels of fame and undisturbed by the appraisals of artistic fanaticism, their preference for simplicity in all the aspects of their daily life—all this not only did not hinder, but rather contributed to, an increasingly intimate understanding; it helped them to see each other in an ideal light, free from the shadows of individual weakness, so that their spirits might blend in mutual comprehension and generous admiration for each other's lifework, unmixed with purely personal considerations. If, as Goethe says, the loftiest mastery is always associated with a noble egotism, this trait was theirs in common, and was probably the main reason that they so seldom visited each other.

What Verdi especially admired in Manzoni, and their closest bond, is the genuine folk-quality of his art, wherein all the characters, imbued with real life, present themselves not as mere puppets constructed according to the faded postulates of some theory, but as sprung from the soil of true folk-lore and an intuitive apprehension of reality. *I promessi sposi* might be called a "folk-story" in which the poet speaks a spontaneous language drawn from actual popular conceptions, a language sure to find an echo in the breast of every Italian. Nor are Verdi's personages mere figures; usually there pulses in their veins, even though they often labor under the stress of a theatrically exaggerated ecstasy, the real blood of the Italian people; he is especially fond of portraying its elemental outbursts in fiery rhythms which arouse enthusiastic, instinctive responses; but always in accord with the demands of the scene. This capacity for moulding in plastic forms lifelike characters endowed with the true folk-spirit and springing from the folk-soul, both Verdi and Manzoni—the one in tones, the other in words—possessed. We must not, however, overlook a marked distinction between them. Manzoni less frequently presents his characters in the ferment of mounting passion, for which Verdi shows a strong predilection, and which is a necessary element in arresting and gripping operatic action. He prefers to

show them in a purified state; however sharply they may be characterized, however distinctly their personalities may stand forth, they are analyzed "in epic tranquility," with psychological consistency. In short, during his portrayal of passionate individuals, the poet seldom allows himself to be carried away by his own passion; he does not live the battle and identify himself with it, like Verdi; he looks down rather, like a god from high Olympus, seeing from afar how the figures born of his teeming imagination move across his vision to their several fates; rejoices in their struggles, smiling, perhaps, in Parnassian superiority at their shortcomings. This is part and parcel of the poet's disposition, who even in his later conversion cannot disavow a vein of skepticism. As regards the inmost nature of his characters, Manzoni appears (as Goethe points out in his criticism of *Adelchi*, Milan, 1822) entirely true and "in full agreement with himself." This essential truthfulness, these fine gradations, the consistent development and inevitableness of his characters, their Arcadian naturalness, the ethical tendency, the purely human emotion, whereon Manzoni's poetical talent is founded and wherein Manzoni is at one with Verdi—this it is that so strongly attracted Verdi to Manzoni and filled him with unbounded admiration for his genius: as Verdi himself unreservedly acknowledged, he found in Manzoni's works an ideal standard for his own. Shakespeare reveals to the playwright Verdi the power of spiritual insight, of formative intuition, the capacity not only to imitate "reality" but to "invent" it; while Manzoni adds to all this the gift of fully harmonizing æsthetic and moral demands with stern realism and with historicity, of so vividly expressing the truth and warmth of the emotions that they seem inspired by nature (as with Shakespeare), yet at the same time so finished, so harmoniously clarified, so artistically balanced (as *not* always with Shakespeare), that art could add nothing more.

Manzoni, like Giusti Niccolini and many others, inspired by a fervent patriotism the radiance of which is reflected in many of his literary works, ranks as one of the greatest representatives of the Risorgimento, as Verdi himself attested when he recognized in him the embodiment of the most sacred of Italy's days of glory. And Verdi exhibits a kindred trait in his unquenchable love for the land of his birth, though only in the measure that it is the unmistakably pronounced and effective driving power in several of his productions. Let us recall his opera *La Battaglia di Legnano*. Born of the impulse to enlist the voice of music in Italy's patriotic effort to cast off the fetters of her bondage and rise into the golden

light of political freedom, this heroic opera of true national color, rich in glorious recollection, mindful, even in its employment of specifically musical resources, of the excitement just then (1849!) pervading the fatherland, will always remain historical evidence for the "musical patriotism" of the composer. Verdi's patriotic longing for freedom here finds vent in a fashion amazing to many of his contemporaries, who could not credit such an outburst from the composer of those caressing, sense-charming melodies. Here Verdi appears in a new aspect, which we may regard as an intensified form of that spontaneous dramatic power, rudiments of which we already find, albeit somewhat restrained, in certain passages of *Nabucco* and *Attila*. Unable in these difficult times to serve with the sword an unhappy fatherland thirsting for independence, he can still lend powerful aid, setting all hearts aflame, by his dramatic musical genius, placing at the disposal of his country's sacred cause a musical technique wonderfully in sympathy with the passions of his countrymen. In an evening newspaper, the "Pallade," for January 29, 1849, we read: "If Verdi was great in his previous operas, by reason of the wealth of imagery, the play of fancy, here he is gigantic in his vivid presentation of Italian emotionality." After a glance at the score we might say: Sometimes altogether too gigantic! Written at a time of revolt, of general excitement, this opera could have been composed only in a style that would express the heated conceptions and feverish mood of the period with elemental force and an unrestrained energy that here and there overleaps, with sovereign contempt, the bounds of artistic symmetry. Verdi's peculiar excellences are, indeed, not lacking, following the dramatic accents of the scene with that vivacity which so endears his compositions to us: the power and intensity of the cantilene, the lively and vibrant instrumentation, inwardly and outwardly adapted to the action, the impressive power of the chorus, the euphonious and well-knit ensemble. But there are passages where all the laws of unity and ordered form are set at naught; as the "Pallade" remarks, here and there phrases destitute of real meaning, here and there frothy declamation masquerading as emotion, "emphasis dragged in as a substitute for passion," continual bombastic inflation "intended to give an impression of grandeur." The deliberate intention of effects thus hauled in by main force, and often without psychological motive, for the purpose of striking at any cost the sparks that should inflame and spread the ardor of the audience for the national cause, certainly tends to lower the value of the opera as a work of art;

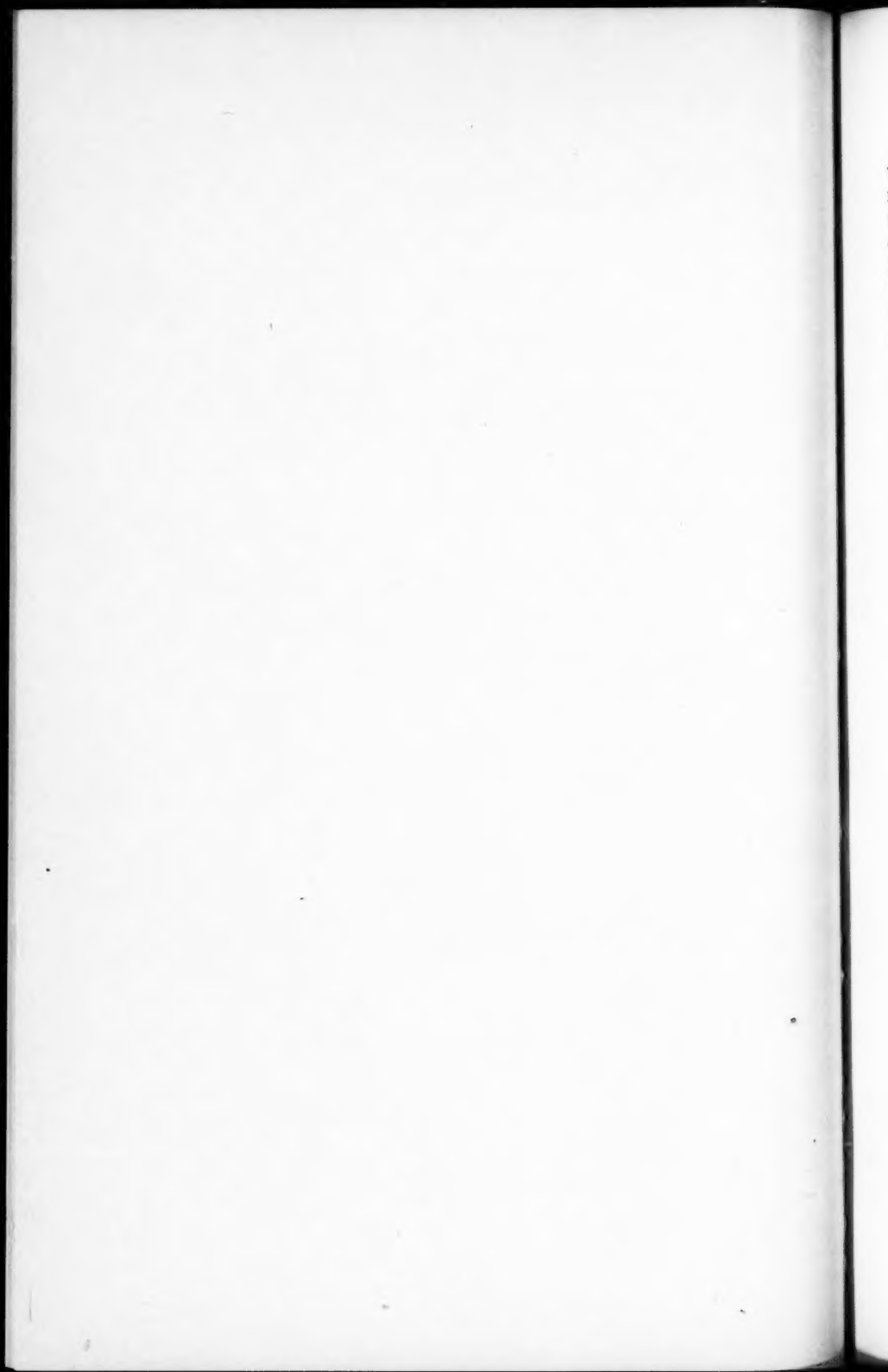
but we should consider that Verdi first and foremost wanted it to serve the mood of the moment and could hardly have intended to produce a work that should claim a place in the regular repertory. He was well aware that the *Battaglia di Legnano*, that glorification of the celebrated Lombardic League, possessed a strictly immediate value. And that value is indisputable. The melodies from this opera fulfilled in 1847-9, with unequalled popularity, a mission comparable to that of the *Marseillaise*. They became the agents of the people's political aspirations, the agitators of a warlike enthusiasm for freedom. The inflammatory energy of this music, the very embodiment of patriotic exultation, was demonstrated by the frenzied enthusiasm that echoed and reëchoed in the Argentina theatre during the première: Long live Verdi! Long live Italy! Tricolored sashes and cockades flashed on the balustrades and on the garments of the impassioned auditors. On February 5th, 1849, the fiery rhythms of this opera (especially a duet, and the entire 4th act) even excited an Italian officer to such a pitch of political delirium that he cried out like a madman; "Bring out the flags!" hurling his sword upon the stage. The reproach cast upon Verdi by a few cool critics in those days when the foaming tide of patriotism ran highest, that he sought to utilize the "life of the day in art"—a reproach born of artistic envy and a mean spirit of detraction—is self-condemnatory. It does not in the least detract from Verdi's musical significance to call him the great composer of the Italian Revolution. The feverish intensity that animates even his earliest operas, the trenchant rhythms, a wild and rough touch, reminiscent of the atmosphere of the Abruzzi—all most clearly portray in music, and with psychological accuracy, the political excitement in the mood of the day. The recent production of *Nabucco* in Mannheim proves that ironic travesties of grand opera, such as Hindemith's *Hin und zurück*, hardly find justification. The youthful freshness of this work, the sweeping enthusiasm with which it was received, show the vanity of sneering at "modern realism." The enemies of melody were forced to lay down their arms before this supreme melodist. The rebellious impetuosity of arias and choruses, the cry for liberation from the tyrant's yoke, which electrified the Scala audiences in 1842, might well find an echo to-day in distracted Germany.

The spiritual affinity between Verdi and Manzoni will, finally, be clear to those who take into account the skeptical attitude toward religion at first common to them both, and the way in which they overcame it. In his period of storm and stress Manzoni



Alessandro Manzoni

(After the portrait of Francesco Hayez, 1841)



was an atheist; to his caustically analytical spirit neither the revered institutions of the Catholic Church nor the most sacred traditions gave pause. But the change soon came. To what circumstances or experiences can it be ascribed? Should we take into consideration the influence of Countess Maffei and her salon, which also included the higher ecclesiastical circles? In any event, the atheist Manzoni became a believer and returned to the bosom of the Church. This remarkable reversal in his mental attitude was also reflected in his creative work. To the deep religious feeling which thenceforward permeated the awakened poet his four hymns bear striking witness, as Goethe recognized in his "Romantiker in Italien." These hymns take for their subject the quintessential elements of the Gospels, in Catholic colors: (1) The Resurrection; (2) Mary; (3) The Birth of Christ; (4) The Passion. The color-play of expression and accent in various metres, the naïve, fervent faith that expresses itself with fresh vigor in the similes, in subtle turns and transitions, justify the judgment of Goethe, who, on the strength of this evidence, concedes to Manzoni a "truly felicitous" talent, a novel and individual manner of treating this traditional subject. Here Manzoni discovers himself (according to Goethe) "as a Christian without rhapsodizing, as catholic without bigotry, as a zealot without austerity." One is agreeably surprised (in these 33 pages) to see how the proselyting spirit inherent in the nature of the Catholic Church attains, here and there, to effective expression, but always in an unobtrusive, naïve, never offensive fashion; for example, where Manzoni amicably represents to the Children of Israel that Mary herself was born of their blood, and would they deny homage to such a queen?

With Verdi we note a similar ascent¹ into the clear light of a profound reverence for God. In his case, too, this was the outcome of personal experiences; but he was fated to undergo peculiarly painful trials that were spared Manzoni. One profound affliction threatened to destroy his intellectual powers: his first wife (*née* Barezzi) and his two children died in swift succession at the very time when he was under contract to write a comedy-

¹Concerning his own religious development, Verdi maintained a reserve due to his awe of sacred things. Besides, everything related to religion was for him a matter of feeling, and Verdi was always chary in expressing his feelings. At all events, Manzoni and Verdi offered their friends many an enigma with regard to their attitude toward religion—"l'oscuro problema," as Cesare Vigna wrote Maffei in September, 1872. Of this much only were they sure, that both laid chief stress on morality—"osservando solo ogni precetto di moralità" (*id.*). His reticence caused Verdi to be held for an "unbeliever." His strictly Catholic wife Giuseppina, to whom a chapel was erected in Santa Agata, often deplored this "unbelief." Verdi was never a believer in dogmas; he was an enemy of priestly misrule in every form, and of all hierarchical ambitions.

opera (*Un giorno di regno*), which, completed while his soul was tortured by an agony of grief, failed utterly—a failure which may have contributed in some measure to his spiritual resurrection. But that which most profoundly urged him toward the eternal spirit and to hearken to its voice, was the death of Manzoni (Milan, May 22, 1873). How else could Verdi restore his spiritual equilibrium than by pouring out in music the deepest emotions aroused by the passing of the venerable master? Through his *Requiem* in honor of Manzoni, Verdi conquered the dæmonic powers of doubt and death that had always tortured him.¹ When other colleagues died, Verdi had expressed his feelings only in a resigned "Triste! triste! triste!" The death of Manzoni was his first "enduring experience," summoned him "solemnly to conjure death" (Weissmann), to reconcile himself with its abiding tragic power by confidence in the eternity of God. The profound religious impulses that had long lain hidden beneath the brilliance and the fame of his career, found vent in this sonorous *Requiem* that counsels the spirit to silent adoration. As musical director of the Società Filarmonica of Busseto, Verdi had as a youth experimented with church music; but at that time his musical development had just begun, and these first works were of worth to him merely as cherished souvenirs, while to posterity they have only archæological interest. In all likelihood they were originally inspired, but they closely followed Palestrina, whom Verdi always cited as the absolute standard in sacred composition. At that early period he lacked ripe experience of life, and a work of art can be immortal only when it springs from the tragic depths of existence, of purifying affliction. The inner motive for writing the *Requiem* is surely to be sought in the wonderful development brought about in the master (then sixty years of age) by the profound tragedy of human life as felt in and measured by the death of Manzoni, his spiritual brother. True, even in the *Requiem*, Verdi remains faithful to the sensuous ideal of beauty that ever hovered before him, and uses the age-old liturgical phrases as the bearers of his colorful melody; but over the vocal soli, the unisons, over the

¹Verdi did not attend the burial of Manzoni (May 29, 1873); he was too deeply moved. As he wrote Maffei: "Pochi saranno piu commossi che era io benché lontano." Not until the third of June did he stand, overcome by emotion, by the temporary grave of his friend in the cemetery at Milan. "No one must be told." During these hours of self-communion he conceived the plan of erecting a memorial to the great poet, in the "Manzoni Requiem." This decision he immediately communicated to the Sindaco of Milan. The "Libera me," which he had already written for his intended Rossini Requiem—but which, in consequence of cabals, the indolence of the municipal authorities of Pesaro, and the over-sensitiveness of Mariani (who was not represented among the composers of the Rossini Mass beside Petrella, Bazzini, and the rest), was never produced—Verdi took over into the Manzoni Requiem.

artfully wrought polyphony of ensembles and choruses, there wafts a breath of eternity, the mighty purpose of an earnest spirit that has felt the healing contact of the cross, and, hearkening to the muffled beating of the pinions of approaching death, has purified and exalted its higher self in pondering the mystery of life and the craving for eternity. Both the imagery of the Catholic school, speculating on the impressionability of the senses, and Verdi's specific artistry, are, indeed, visible in the *Requiem*, but marvellously clarified, reflecting the light of divinity itself. Here the opera-composer engages in the lofty adventure of expressing in music the shuddering awe of the *Dies Iræ*—and is singularly successful in the attempt. It may be that his passionate theatrical temperament, intent on scenic effect, could even here not be denied, that the "Day of Judgment" makes the impression of an opera *en miniature* that hardly does full justice to the apocalyptic force of the *Dies Iræ*; still, whoever gives himself up to the score will admit that in the *Requiem* the sincerity of a creative emotion finds expression which could hardly be more vividly conceived. Here "the conjuration of death is achieved" by the most vital artistry of Verdi's palette (Weissmann). Berlioz, with unprecedented instrumental resources, could indeed create in his *Messe* a tone-picture that stirred the very depths of the soul, though tending to the picturesque and exciting; Beethoven committed his distraught heart, the agonizing strife of a discordant and dæmonic nature, to the tones of his *Missa Solemnis*: in certain passages one senses the tempestuous fervor, the titanic efforts, wherewith he strives to lay hold on the sacred chalice of redemption. With Verdi the appeal is more human, more conciliatory; the divine mysteries are brought closer to the believing soul in lucid, luminous forms; the four solo voices are sensuously lovely, pointing "to the cosmic original cause"; chorus and orchestra, though the highest art of dramatic construction is constantly at work in fashioning their effects of light and shade, never want in vocal melody capable of the loftiest expression. The whispered "requiem," the imploring "dona"; the staccato passages accompanying the *Kyrie eleison* with its continuous pianissimo so full of restrained agitation; and then the abrupt outburst of the *Dies Iræ*, in such overpowering contrast to what precedes, with its four accented quarter-notes which, according to Verdi, "are more significant than they seem," its headlong downward rush from *G*, and the fearful interjected moaning of the chorus! And how the feeling of breathless awe is expressed at the *Quantus tremor* by the abrupt change from sixteenths to reverberating

quarter-notes! How a whole revolting world appallingly upsurges in the *Tuba mirum* with the full sweep of the trumpets, entire groups descending in chromatics! Then the sudden subsidence into the *Mors stupebit*, the mild propitiatory sinking of the cantilena at "Unde mundus," and much else—e.g., the mystic inspiration of the Offertory, the masterly closing fugue—all these elements of musical beauty one must intimately feel and follow. Then shall we see that this work bears the stamp of great drama, together with a mystical sublimity of exceptional scope in which shine the opalescent gleams of infinity itself. It is a memorial in music to a beautiful and noble faith, by which, in this Verdi renaissance, we can only be deeply moved: for those who in these materialistic times have preserved a trace of responsiveness to thoughts and sensations of eternity, who can still accept it in a spirit of belief, will know that the *Requiem* produces this profound effect because it was conceived and born of faith and grew to maturity through the most soul-searching experiences in the life of the composer.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

SYMPHONIC MUSIC IN SOVIET RUSSIA

By NIKOLAI SOKOLOFF

IN the summer of 1930 I revisited Russia and was much interested to observe the present situation in that country with regard to music.

What has happened to the symphony orchestra and symphonic music in Russia, with its new economic structure that influences every art, as the economic structure must always do? Can this form of music-making bear the heavy load of extra socialistic and educational responsibilities that the Soviet Government has placed on its shoulders, a load that all art must share? What lies beneath the busy outward organization that carries music on as a corollary of mass benefit to the original proposition of artistic satisfaction? These are the questions that perplexed me as they do every traveler who is concerned with symphonic music.

Russia had a vivid musical life which was temporarily suspended in the paralyzing days of revolution and post-revolution. With the organization of a communistic state, however, it was soon realized that the arts were necessary to human life, if only as channels for propaganda. It was expedient to retain the heritage of the old in the forms it manifested, even while groping for new forms and new ideas that should mean for every man contact with the arts and to some extent participation in them.

In pre-revolutionary days, the principal musical activities were two: opera and symphony concerts. It is these two, also, that in the new Russia form the basis of musical culture, although many ramifications have been added. Conservatories and universities, the feeders for opera, symphony, chamber music and even *narodny* or people's music, also take their part, as they are expected to do.

A comparison between the two greatest activities, opera and symphony concerts, as they existed in pre-revolutionary days, is necessary to an understanding of their relative importance, difficulties, and successes under the new regime. Opera and the ballet have always held a stronger position in Russia than the symphony orchestra. This is natural in a country that loves spectacle, the pomp and pageantry of colorful and dramatic events. It is a phase of this affection for the theatre that has given the Russian drama its important position in the world.

Russia has boasted few eminent symphonic composers; whether this be cause or effect is difficult to say. With the exception of Tchaikowsky, who was the most prominent, Glazounoff, Rachmaninoff and Borodin, few musicians expressed themselves extensively in the symphonic form. This condition still obtains today, when Miaskowsky, Krein, Shostakovitch and one or two others, all of whom have also written operas, are alone in the field.

Opera, because it tells a story, is more amenable than symphonic music to the expression of ideas and doctrines, which are exactly what the Soviet Government demands of it. It was not always free from governmental interference even under the reign of the Czars. "Le Coq d'Or" was rudely suppressed because of its satire on kingship, although just that quality would keep it, and others, in high favor today. The Ukraine could not hear its native opera, "Taraz Bulba," by Lissenko, for forty years because Greater Russia denied political independence to this province.

It is inevitable, therefore, that opera, as a natural and familiar expression, and as the best musical agency for reaching the mass mind and implanting therein desired ideas, should retain its pre-eminence in Russia.

Because the symphonic form is absolute music, it is less pliable to such purposes. Only the broadest outlines of emotional content may be sketched, and a symphonic work explicitly designed to be "revolutionary" may just as well seem to be expressing the passion evoked by some other emotion. Since it is left to any individual hearer to respond to such music in his own way, in spite of accompanying treatises that may warn him to think "red" when he listens, symphonic music must fail in a great degree to be the germ-carrier for the Communist idea.

Both of these reasons for the precedence of opera over pure music bear their fruit in the comparative stability and success of the two forms today. The opera's physical well-being is cherished; the symphony concerts are placed somewhat in the position of a step-sister.

More than a dozen fine opera-houses flourish in the various cities of Russia today—in Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov, Leningrad, and so on, while the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre is the government's pet among them all. They receive big yearly budgets from the government—Moscow's woman Communist director (every organization has two directors, one the artistic or technical expert, the other the treasurer who must be a member of the Communist

party) has placed its opera under the central control so that the rubles flow freely from the Kremlin to the Ploschad Sverdlova. There are countless smaller operas as well, though they are not run on such a magnificent scale. The big houses themselves are triumphantly beautiful; never, for example, have I seen a more charming opera house than Odessa's. Settings are elaborate, costly, and often extremely ingenious; singers are excellent—and excellently paid in comparison to members of other occupations in Russia; choruses are superbly trained, the opera orchestra commands the best players; the stage direction is good. Of the mechanical equipment, only adequate lighting effects are lacking, even Moscow's opera suffering in this respect. Odessa, after a recent fire, has imported from Germany a complicated fire alarm that is the darling of the opera house; in fact, the bells and mechanical gadgets are worshipped on a pedestal almost as lofty as music's own.

No such care and attention are lavished on the symphony orchestra. Only one purely symphonic body of any consequence exists in Russia, the Leningrad Philharmonic. Its integrity is preserved, perhaps through the fact that the society owns its own building (in which, by the way, there is a complete and very interesting musical museum). This is quite a concession from the government. Other orchestras are derived from the opera personnel, even the Moscow "Sophil," which, however, has its own organization and strives to make music known to the masses. To accomplish this, the orchestra plays regularly in the *rayonnes*, or districts of the city, gives performances, most of which are free, before workers' clubs and conferences—a plan that all musical organizations and many individual artists are required to follow. A series of winter concerts is given, but it depends to some extent on free time from the opera, which has two orchestras of 100 men each, playing alternately in the two houses controlled by the Bolshoi Theatre management.

Summer is the time for orchestral concerts. When the serious business of the winter (opera) is over, there is a general feeling of relaxation. It is partly in this spirit that the summer concerts are given, with men from the opera orchestra playing.

The problem of conductors for symphonic music in Russia is one that cannot be easily settled. Most of Russia's conductors are opera-bred, opera-trained, and they lead symphony orchestras as a "side-line." Foreign conductors are enormously popular. A long procession of them streams from the outside to Baku, on the Caspian Sea, the locale of the only summer orchestral season

of any pretensions. There are also several guests for the winter season in Leningrad and Moscow.

No conductorial problem exists, of course, in the Conductorless Orchestra, the famous "Persymphans" which plays in Moscow in the winter. Zetlin, the violinist, has always been its guiding spirit, and may be called its conductor in every sense save the actual waving of the baton. Its difficulty is a far more serious one. As the similar organization in New York has discovered, long hours of arduous rehearsal, in which the better players are handicapped by the slow progress of the poorer, tire even the most ardent. Several players confessed to me in Baku that the group was becoming weary with the amount of effort expended, effort that they felt could have been turned to better results under one acknowledged controlling mind. The public, too, has grown a little bored with what first pleased its fancy as a great novelty.

Zetlin has retained his enthusiasm, naturally. When I met him in Moscow, he earnestly expounded the principles of the group.

"It was not the original idea to do away with the conductor because of his dominance, in accordance with socialistic creeds, as was supposed," he explained. "We felt that the individual development of each musician in responsibility and understanding of the scores, in learning a rhythmic sense and individual integrity, was a cause worth championing. If a conductor were ever to stand before such an orchestra, he would find it an instrument better trained than others."

Two more problems beset the symphony orchestra, traceable, I believe, to the same original cause as the others: lack of real, vital Russian interest in symphony music itself. Both have to do with scarcity of equipment. The instruments that many of the orchestra players now possess are incredibly bad, and symphonic libraries are extremely limited.

The government explains that its budget will not stretch to include new instruments, which have to be imported and paid for in gold. This same gold must buy machinery when money is obtained from exports. Even if the men starve themselves and pinch their small incomes to save for the purchase of new instruments, they cannot buy them without the permission of the government, since Russian money has no value outside of the country.

Only the Moscow opera is properly equipped in this matter. But the Moscow opera is the show-place of the nation; it is the one artistic triumph to which the Russians point with pride. Therefore it must have the best, and for it money is always available.

When I stood before the orchestra in Baku and exclaimed sorrowfully, time after time, "Potchemoo ve igraete tahk falshivo?" (Why do you play so false?) equally sorrowful expressions on the faces of the men answered me. They could not always help it.

When a sour clarinet was already so patched and mended that another cut might ruin it entirely, who could blame the clarinetist for not cutting it and risking his only means of livelihood? Better play false, but go on playing. Horns were stuffed with cotton to plug holes that traitorously produced evil sounds when least expected; the trombonist had had to shave down a part of his instrument that did not fit very well; a bass player asked me piteously if I could not send him a little resin, which he could not buy for love or money. Precious strings were guarded like pearls, and it was agony to hear them snap in the damp wind that blew on several nights from the Caspian Sea over the orchestra shell.

The condition of symphonic repertoires is perhaps less serious, since all Russian music, at least, is available and is enough to carry interest over many years. Their own music is most beloved by Russian audiences anyway. The Moscow Sophil plays the old works over and over again (interspersed with the standard works of Beethoven, Wagner, and so on), and my most popular programs in Baku were the ones that contained "Sheherazade." The only "foreign" music heard in Russia is what is there already, bought before the Revolution and therefore not very up-to-date or what foreign conductors bring with them. Russia is so isolated that in music, as well as in other activities, little is known of the world outside.

Opera repertoires are much more flexible, containing the old stand-bys of Italian, German and French literature as well as the native operas, and reaching out for new Russian scores as fast as they can be written. A few of the new operas from the outside world are also much played—"Jonny Spielt Auf," for example—but most of the novelties are native, many commissioned by the government, all subject to its approval.

The symphonic repertoire is slowly gaining, however, thanks to one important factor—the government publishing house. In an enormous building in Moscow the work of printing new and old music goes steadily on. One may obtain there the very latest Russian scores as well as valuable works of the old masters, many of which are not obtainable outside the country at present.

Few of these novelties, however, had penetrated to the library of Baku. Making programs for thirteen concerts there

was one of the most trying experiences I have ever known. As I had not expected to conduct when I went to Russia, I had taken no music with me, as foreign conductors usually do, although it is an expensive and troublesome business.

A midnight conference with the managers and the librarian of the Baku orchestra, immediately on my arrival after a more than two days train-journey, soon convinced me that it would require some masterful juggling and a great deal of compromise with my own desires to evolve interesting programs and to avoid what had already been overplayed. The César Franck Symphony? Rhené-Baton had played it three times just before I came. Never mind. I could play it anyway, perhaps. Tschai-kowsky? Well, of course, but they never could hear too much of him, even if some people thought his emotion "bourgeois." Brahms? The Second and Fourth Symphonies were there, but I wanted to test the mettle of the orchestra before I settled on Brahms.

So it went. Never were programs made and unmade with such feverish activity; each work that was new to the orchestra I approached with trepidation. As a matter of fact, it was the old, worn, routine works that were most difficult to do, in one sense. Performances of Debussy's "La Mer" and "Iberia," which most of the orchestra had never seen, were the most outstanding musical successes. It was gruelling to produce them, but I could build from the beginning, and did not have to struggle with preconceived ideas.

The search for novelties was frantic. In desperation, I finally included Casella's arrangement of "Islamey" on one program, in spite of my long objections, because, as the persistent little manager insisted: "It will look well on the *affiches*." This reliance on sensational advertising and on the necessity for novelty had been built up in Baku to a large extent, with one foreign conductor after another, and a public that is not as much interested in music as in sensation. (Where have we heard that before?)

This may be dangerous for the Baku summer concerts. It is impossible to prophesy what may happen, or to know what may already have happened, in that uncertain country. If the energy and devotion of the Baku concert managers mean anything, the concerts will continue forever. One man, Grigory Abrahmovitch Madatov, a clever and charming Armenian, was up from dawn almost to another dawn each day, struggling with adverse circumstances that would defeat a less indefatigable person. There were cancellations from soloists and orchestra men, and the ne-

cessity of replacing them in a spot away from the center of musical life; campaigns of poster and display advertising that would compare favorably with similar American projects; arrangements for the "popular" nights between symphony concerts, with soloists or native Turkish music—sure sources of income. Madatov, in addition to all the administrative details, played first flute in the orchestra. He was a very fine artist, too.

The Baku concerts are made possible through an individual who believes in them and persuades the Baku government that money is necessary to keep them going. Baku is a rich oil-center, and there is a surplus that can be devoted to projects which other communities might consider as unnecessary luxuries. Even with this subsidy, it is necessary to keep in the good graces of the Communist director of amusements, who is apt to be a man (like many of the Communist co-directors of all institutions) who knows little about the real subject of his administration, but a great deal about politics.

Underlying all these surface handicaps of symphony orchestras like a subtle current, and perhaps the real cause for them, runs a very definite feeling of frustration and inferiority. Outwardly the business of making music goes on, spurred by the unconquerable desire of the music-makers themselves and by the official attitude of encouragement.

The words of Lenin are still quoted at every opportunity:

"The arts belong to the people. They should penetrate through the length and breadth of all the working masses. They should embrace the feeling, thought and will of the masses and should uplift them."

It is doubtful, however, if these masses—or if any other so-called "masses"—are ready for symphonic music, except in its simplest form. Since they cannot understand it, and could not be expected to, they are apt to become resentful, to think that a musician is not very much of a workman after all, and to label him and his music as "bourgeois." Should this feeling become articulate, what we call the higher forms of music may possibly be "liquidated," the courteous but not less damning word for extinction.

As long as the crowds are satisfied with balalaika and accordion bands—the two most beloved "popular" musical manifestations—or with the opera's spectacle and folk-song, why force them to accept music that they feel is "bourgeois," that cannot, by its very nature, advance their Soviet state?

One possible hope exists. With the wide training that now goes on in the conservatories and among the workers, a real

love for music may develop and grow strong enough to justify itself. Ten thousand students are said to be enrolled in the Moscow Conservatory this year. Five hundred of these, out of 1,500 applicants, were expected to join the Musical Workers Faculty. These entrants must have had not less than three years' experience as hired laborers and must show some musical ability. They are taught theoretical subjects, and to be instructors (leaders of choirs, orchestras, folk instruments and music for children) and performers (even jazz band instruments are taught).

Out of all this fermentation a real musical life may grow. That this life should contain symphonic music as a necessary element, a flowering, seems inevitable to us, who have seen musical structures built up with that pinnacle in view. We must remember that Russia is building anew, in many senses, building with new ideas, even with new people. The musical culture in other countries has grown through hundreds of years; should Russia not be allowed a little time?

An appreciation of finer music does not necessarily require qualities that the Russians have branded as "bourgeois." But it does pre-suppose an innate love for music and frequent opportunities to hear it. Of opportunities there are many in Russia today. Among the thousands who are listening and studying, is it not reasonable to suppose that a few at least will prove responsive, and that the number will grow with the opportunities?

Many people in a nation may grow to be musical; but that nation cannot be "made musical" out of whole cloth. The zealots of any country are apt to overlook this. Whether the character of the present Russian experiment will allow a man to be musical, even if his neighbor is not, remains to be seen.

If a growth persists against the discouragement that fine music meets in some quarters, and weathers the bare tolerance it receives from others; if there is patience for its development from the roots now being planted, and not too much insistence on an extra-musical significance from music that will not permit such motivation, then symphonic music in Russia should endure.

GLUCK'S DRAMATURGY

By EDGAR ISTELE

FROM an historical point of view Gluck was Janus-headed: he looked backward to the beginnings of operatic art, to that company of Florentine intellectuals who in 1597 thought they had revived antique tragedy in their production of the first opera (*Dafne*, libretto by Rinuccini, music by Peri); while his endeavors distinctly point forward along the path which was to lead to their final expression in the "complete artwork" of Richard Wagner. In the matter of time, too, Gluck with his reform of the opera in the eighteenth century stands precisely midway between Claudio Monteverdi, the great master of seventeenth-century operatic art, and Wagner, the master-spirit of the nineteenth century.

The word "opera" comes from the Italian, signifying, in the phrase *opera in musica*, a "work in music." In the course of the seventeenth century this general term first came to mean specifically an art-form which until then had been called *dramma per musica* (music-drama) or "melodrama," a term now applied only to spoken drama with musical accompaniment. All these terms, however, referred only to theatrical works which presented dramatic action, with the coöperation of song, orchestra, and dance. In the course of time the terms "opera" and "music-drama" have acquired contrasted meanings, the former being now applied to works in which the musical element predominates, whereas the latter connotes a preponderance of the dramatic element.

The great problem that presents itself in a discussion of the opera has probably never been more clearly formulated than by the poet Gottfried Herder, who, in a little-known letter of Nov. 5, 1774 (printed in the "*Steiermärkische Zeitschrift*" for 1830, Vol. X), wrote to Gluck:

The great schism betwixt Poetry and Music, which has brought these two arts so far asunder, lies in the question, Which of the two shall lead, which follow? The musician would have his art rule, the poet his; so that they often stand in each other's way. Each wishes to turn out a fine whole, and frequently fails to consider that he must deliver but a part which only when combined with the other part shall produce a perfect whole.

This conflict between poetic (rather, poetico-dramatic) and purely musical demands runs like a red thread through the whole history of opera; and out of it arises one of the most interesting problems of the present time.

For twenty-five years Gluck studied Italian opera scores only, attempting nothing more than to compose operas after the manner of the second Neapolitan School, then in vogue. Now, however, it dawned upon him that the problem in opera is not so much a question of musical presentation as of scenic production, and therefore the concern of the libretto. It now became imperative for him to leave the rut of the conventional librettists, the Metastasios, and find books that accorded with his sense of lofty simplicity and serene grandeur (in the sense of Winckelmann's antique ideal). Gluck himself—in Burney's opinion, "not only a friend of poetry, but himself a poet"—although a highly gifted writer (he was the first great musician to join in polemical discussion) and thoroughly versed in the mechanism of the stage, was evidently incapable of constructing a libretto in the new style. He finally found his man in Raniero de' Calzabigi (1715-95), not a professional musician, but a well-educated merchant and an admirer of Shakespeare, whom he once called "the English Æschylus."

The importance ascribed by Gluck to the poet's function is shown in the following remark:

However great may be the talent of the composer, he will produce nothing but mediocre music so long as the poet is unable to awaken that enthusiasm without which all manifestations of art must appear dull and lifeless. My music strives simply and naturally to attain the highest intensity of expression, and to reinforce the declamation in the poetry.

And Calzabigi thus describes his coöperation with Gluck:

I read my *Orfeo* aloud to him, declaiming various passages several times and calling his attention to differences in the shading of my delivery, to the pauses, the tempi, the dynamics, wherever I wished that he should take note of their effect in his composition. At the same time I begged him to refrain from using the runs, cadences, ritornelli, and all the other exaggerated accessories of our current music. . . . Thus, while Gluck became the creator of dramatic music, he did not create it out of nothing. I provided him with the basic material—the Chaos, if you will; we both share, therefore, in the honor of this creation.

But *Orfeo ed Euridice*, the common creation of Gluck and Calzabigi, is only a transitional work. Gluck's artistic principles were not yet as firmly fixed, theoretically and practically, as in his later works. Still, we may apply to the final "Orpheus" certain precepts that we glean from his intercourse with Parisian friends in after-years. Of peculiar interest are some conversations between Gluck and the author Olivier de Corencez (d. 1810), which were published by the latter in 1796 as an appendix to his

poems. Corencez once asked Gluck why his compositions made such a soul-stirring impression on him, a mere amateur of music; he said that all earlier operas seemed monotonous, whereas his delight in Gluck's works remained unimpaired. Gluck gave the following answer, which furnishes a key to all his musico-dramatic work:

There is just one reason for it, but a very weighty one. Before beginning work I try above all things to forget that I am a musician. I forget myself, so as to see only my characters. It is the contrary procedure that is so disastrous in every art. When the poet cannot forget his "I," he weaves euphonious tirades which, because they are contrary to Nature, play havoc with the action; the painter tries to outdo Nature, and thereby achieves the unnatural; the actor essays declamation, and becomes stilted; the composer seeks brilliancy, and inspires only weariness and boredom. His arias, his duets, which seem to you so much alike, are not so in reality; if you were a musician, you would discover not only very notable differences in them, but also many beauties. The fact that all these numbers impress you as so much alike can be explained only by their poverty of effect.

This answer requires elucidation. The works that bored Corencez possessed, in Gluck's opinion, certain purely musical beauties, but failed of effect because they did not fit the dramatic situation; to prove this truth Gluck himself had once, in one of his earlier operas, intentionally spoiled the effect of a musical number that in itself was lovely, by wrongly placing it. Now, when he admits that in composing an opera he tries first of all to forget that he is a musician, the deeper meaning of this apparently paradoxical statement can be only this: that he seeks to forget all purely musical means of expression in order to use only such as the dramatic situation imperatively demands. In connection herewith Gluck makes another no less important admission, concerning which Corencez writes:

Gluck knew that the ear easily tires, and that no effect can then be depended on; for this reason he confined, whenever possible, any opera that he had accepted for composition to three acts. In addition to the connections that welded the several parts into one whole, he sought to introduce so great a variety that the hearers' interest would be held to the end, without their noticing the composer's intention. "First," said Gluck, "I always go over each act separately, then through the entire piece. I always sketch out the plan of the composition as though I were sitting in the middle of the parquet. Once the ground plan of the whole opera is settled and the characteristic traits of the leading *dramatis personæ* duly noted, I consider the opera finished, although I have not yet written a single note. But this preparation usually costs me an entire year, and not infrequently brings on a serious illness; and still many people call this 'composing easy songs.'"

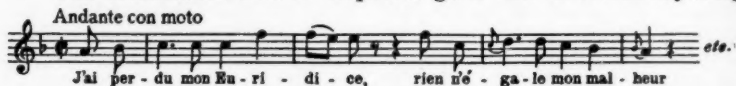
These observations reveal the peculiar genius of Gluck: for him it was not the musical working-out (which to his mind was really of secondary importance), but the dramatic structure, the scenic considerations, which were of principal importance. In order not to overtire the ear, he planned his musical effects with the greatest possible simplicity; indeed, his economy of resources is positively astonishing. This permits us to understand the curious anecdote handed down by Gluck's pupil, Salieri.

In demonstrating at the piano a tragic opera, "Les Danaïdes," which he was composing under Gluck's supervision, Salieri came in an aria to a passage that did not suit him, though he could not say why. Gluck also liked the aria on the whole, but the passage Salieri found fault with displeased him too, without his being able to say why. Not until Salieri at his request had sung the aria for the third time did Gluck exclaim, suddenly interrupting him: "Now I have it! This passage smells of music!"—"This original remark of the great man," says Salieri, "is of the highest importance for every musician. One can say of his operas, That is not music! as one can say of the paintings of Correggio and Titian, That is not painted!" A celebrated painter once said to a patron who expressed a wish for "brilliant colors": "Who told you that paintings are made with colors?" This witty rejoinder also sheds light upon the problem of operatic composition as first solved by Gluck: operas are no more "made with music," than paintings are "made with colors." Quite other factors lay the foundation, and whoever is thoroughly conversant with these will himself find the right "colors" for his dramatic "tone-painting."

As Liszt remarks in his little essay on "Orpheus," Gluck did not aim at interpreting the passions of peculiarly eccentric individuals (like our moderns), but rather to express in their fullest intensity feelings common to all mankind. Perhaps (Liszt opines) this sort of presentation of character explains the comparatively small number of Gluck's admirers as well as the great enthusiasm of these few. The general public prefers to feel its imagination stirred by extraordinary doings rather than by these simple strains created from the depths of the human soul.

Two examples may be drawn upon as typical of Gluck's ideas.

The celebrated aria of Orpheus gave rise to a century-long



contest, during which no one even took the trouble to give a hearing to Gluck's own view of the matter. While this aria was moving

Bruch: Hand aus 17^{te} Januar 1780.

Wien d. 31 Dec 1779

Meiner Frau, der Catharina, und Joh, wiewohl ich euer, Alteser fürchtet,
wir auch schon in Blumendrucke alle die fr. Drucke zu den Meinen
habe, und allen euren gütlich gedenke, aber mit den Meinen
großem Dank ist mit dieser Courier noch nicht aufrecht, weil
es allererst euer Briefe empfangen habe, jedoch wird selbst auf
das künftige Monat nicht ~~aus~~ auf bleiben, den sie überdauern
ist, weil wir für einen wackeren Majordomus, der uns sehr, und über
wachen, ist haben, der H. Bailly de Kollard commission gegeben, uns
auf allem zugehen den Hymne à l'Éclaircissement zu lassen, und
mit der ersten Courier unfehlbar zu schicken, weil selbst die jungen
der sehr Concert de benéfice bräutet, lassen sie sich die Sache an-
gelegen sein, damit die Sache nicht marquis, sie danken für torte
wacht. Was den Narcisse ^{Karlsruhe} anbelaugt, so bin ich bereit selbst
die adjustment, allein ist nicht unabgänglich die partition d'au-
geln, so soll mir durch die Courier mit und, die großmüthige
schick, ist worden sie alle den mit der Connection einwärts zu-
schick, ist nicht ja die über festsetzung der tötter regulir, selbst
ist oder partition nicht ohne Rath; was der H. Mathon anbelaugt,

First page of a letter, dated Vienna, December 31, 1779, from Gluck to
Franz Kruthoffer

(By courtesy of the Library of Congress)

beant: Paris am 17ten Jänner 1780.

Wien den 31 Xbre 1779.

Meine frau, der Calin, und Ich, wintschen ihnen, Wertester freyndt, wie auch Herrn v Blumendorff alles Erdenkliche zu dem Neyen Jahr, und allen unsern gutten freynden, aber mit den Neyen Jahrsgeschänck kan ich mit diesen Courier noch nicht aufwarten, weilen ich aller Erst ihre brieffe Empfangen habe, jedoch wird solches auf das künfftige Monath nicht aussbleiben, dan sie verdienen Es, weilen sie fein wacker Neyigkeiten vor uns sammeln, und übermachen, ich habe den H: Bailly de Rouillet commission gegeben, mir auf kleinen papier den hymne à l'Amour copiren zu lassen, und mit den Ersten Courier unfehlbar zu schicken, weilen solchen Mr: janson vor seyn Concert de benefice brauchet, lassen sie sich die sache angelegen seyn, damit die sache nicht manquirt, sie könnte ihme torte machen. Was den Narcisse von Baron Tchoudi anbelangt, so bin ich bereit solchen zu adjustiren, alleine ich muss unabgänglich die partition dazu haben, Er soll mir durch den Courier nur indessen die geschriebene schicken, ich werde sie alsdan mit der Correction wiederumb zurückschicken, ich mus ja die übereinstimmung der töne reguliren, welches ich ohne partition nicht thun kan; was den H: Mathou anbelangt, so müssen sie die zahlung auf alle mögliche art betreiben, dan ich habe diese schuld an Baron Fries abgetretten, welcher zu Paris damit disponiret, ich wolte umb nichts in der Welt ihme auf zweydeütende gedanken gegen mich bringen, dahero bitte ihnen, sich dieses geschäfts sehr angelegen zu seyn lassen; bitte Mr: de Vismes zu sagen, das ich mich vor das überschickte bedancke, und das ich solches Ehestens schriftlich thun werde. Ihre Theatral Neyigkeiten seyndt recht merckwürdig, fahren sie nur fort, dan sie wissen nicht, wie lieb sie meine frau dafür hat, dan sie sagen solche allezeit mit Einen gewissen sale Attico, allein ich viel ihnen nicht zu viel loben, sondern nur sagen, das vor allzeit ihrer wahrer freyndt und Diener zu seyn mich glicklich schätze adieu cher Ami! alles in Eil.

Ans: Paris 17th Jan. 1780.

Vienna, 31 December 1779.

My wife, Calin, and I wish you dearest friend as also Herrn v. Blumendorff everything imaginable for the New Year, and all our good friends, but the New Year's gift I cannot yet forward by this Courier, because I have only just received your letters, but this will not delay beyond next month, for you deserve it, since you collect and send us fine, bravely news, I commissioned M. Bailly du Rouillet to let me have copied on small paper the *hymne à l'Amour*, and to send it without fail by the next post because Mr. Janson needs it for his benefit concert, please take this matter to heart so that it does not fall through, it might do him injury. So far as Baron Tchoudi's Narcisse is concerned I am prepared to adjust it, only I simply must have the score, Let him meanwhile send me by post the manuscript, I will send it back with the correction for I must bring the keys into accord, which I cannot do without the score. So far as concerns M. Mathou, you must try to get payments in every possible way, for I have made over this debt to Baron Fries, who is attending to it in Paris. I would not for anything in the world let him think equivocally of me, wherefor I beg you to give this matter your best attention; please tell Mr. de Vismes that I thank him for what he sent and will write very soon. Your theatrical news are indeed remarkable, just continue, for you do not know how much my wife loves you for it, as you say these things always with a certain Attic salt, but I do not want to praise you too much, but only to say, that I am happy to consider myself your true friend and Servant, adieu cher ami! in haste.

thousands to tears, a critical contemporary, Boyé, remarked that one might set its melody just as well, or even more appropriately, to words of the opposite meaning, thus: "*J'ai trouvé mon Euridice, rien n'égale mon bonheur.*" Hanslick, in his essay on "*The Beautiful in Music*," seized upon this remark as proof that any dramatically effective melody conceived as pure music, dissociated from any poetic intention, possesses multifold significance, adding:

We are by no means of the opinion that the composer, in this case, can be held quite free from reproach; for music assuredly possesses far more definite tones for the expression of most agonizing grief. From among a hundred examples, however, we choose precisely this one, firstly, because it involves the very master to whom is ascribed the greatest precision in dramatic expression, and secondly, because several generations have been lost in admiration of this melody as giving expression to the feeling of profoundest grief set forth in the words connected with it.

Hanslick was obviously unaware that Gluck himself, in his little-known preface to *Paride ed Elena*, had distinctly expressed his own opinion regarding this very aria. Gluck wrote:

The traits that distinguished Rafael from the common run of painters are, in most cases, hardly noticeable. Slight deviations in outline do not destroy likeness in a caricature, but they totally disfigure the face of a lovely woman. In music I will proffer only one example—the aria from the opera *Orfeo*, "*Che farò senza Euridice.*" Undertake only the least alteration in it, either in the movement or in the style of expression, and it becomes a dance for the puppet-show. In a musical number of this sort a note sustained for a longer or shorter time, a vocal intensification, carelessness in tempo, a trill, a run, or the like, can spoil the effect of a whole scene. When the point at issue is simply to interpret a musical composition in accordance with the principles I have laid down, the presence of the composer is just as necessary as the sun is for created Nature. Like the sun, he is the life and soul of his creation; without him all is disorder and confusion; and yet he must be prepared to meet all manner of obstacles as long as there are people who, although they have eyes and ears, are so unmindful of their constitutional functions as to assume the rôle of judges of the fine arts, merely because they happen to have eyes and ears. For the propensity to pass hasty judgment on matters that one understands least, is a common failing of mankind.

Here another observation of Gluck to Corencez is in order. The latter had found fault with a passage in *Iphigénie en Aulide*; Gluck asked him if the long note that impressed the hearer so unpleasantly when heard in the room in which they then were had had a similar effect in the theatre. Corencez replied in the negative, whereupon Gluck remarked:

Well, I might be satisfied with that answer. If I have pleased in the theatre, my object is attained, and I assure you that I care very little whether my music meets with approval in a salon or concert-hall. It often happens that good concert-music is ineffective on the stage, and conversely it pertains to the nature of the case that good dramatic music fails to please in the concert-hall. Your objection is like that of some man posted on the dome of a high building, and calling down to a painter standing below, "My dear Sir! what are you doing there? Is that a nose? Is that an arm? Really, it doesn't look like either!" Whereupon the painter would rejoin, much more justly: "Come down here, Sir! First see, and then judge!"

Corencez tells us, similarly, that someone once called Gluck's attention to the contradiction between the words of Orestes, "Le calme rentre dans mon cœur," and the weirdly syncopated rhythm of the accompanying violas, in the aria of Orestes (*Iphigénie en Tauride*, No. 14). Gluck warmly exclaimed: "Orestes is lying! He takes for calm what is merely the exhaustion of his organism. But the Furies always renew their attack here [striking his breast]: he has murdered his mother!"

This statement is confirmed by Countess Genlis, who adds, with delicate appreciation, that we owe to Gluck the felicitous device of expressing through the accompaniment what is passing in the mind, while the words seek to conceal it. And Corencez opines: "Never has a conception in dramatic music revealed such genius!"

This is, in fact, the point wherein Gluck's achievement is epoch-making for all time. Every later master could elaborate this genuinely dramatic procedure in his own way, but without surpassing it in principle.

In brief and precise definition of Gluck's place in the history of opera we may say: Gluck was the first to set simple, natural texts to music with careful consideration of the sense of the words. He discarded *colorature*, as well as superfluous orchestral *ritornelli*, and by way of compensation infinitely enhanced the significance of the orchestra. He elevated the overture into an integral part of his operas, and relegated the castrati to final oblivion. He renounced the *recitativo secco* in favor of the—dramatically—more fruitful recitative with orchestral accompaniment; he reinstated the chorus and lent it new importance.

Wagner adopted a number of Gluck's principles, and in so far the paths leading to their respective goals sometimes run parallel, though their individualities are wholly divergent. For Gluck was, as a person (which could never be said of Wagner) sound through and through, as an artist, uncommonly chaste and

reserved. Only in one point are they alike: both were frankly men of the theatre, composers, first and foremost, for the stage. Both were averse to pure musical effect apart from the stage. Absolute music and the music of the theatre resemble each other only in that they are executed by the same instruments. In all else they are two entirely different spheres. Only by appreciating this fact can one understand that great master, Gluck, and what he accomplished.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

MUSIC AND SUPERSTITION

By RUDOLF FELBER

IN the beginning was Belief : the Belief in a single, altogether real world, wherein the sensual and the supersensual were intertwined with one another, where waking and dreaming, being and seeming, were not opposites, but mutually supplementary and complementary states. It was a belief that animated and inspired all Nature, whether man or animal, plant or stone, the elements or the stars. It associated all existing things with spirits, even peopled the air with them. According to his personal relations with nature, accordingly as nature showed itself more or less accommodating to his desires, or offered more or less resistance—passive or active—to them, primitive man conceived these spirits as good spirits, his gods in the strict sense of the term, and as evil spirits or demons. With growing enlightenment and the accompanying higher degrees of culture, the sensual and supersensual worlds, reality and unreality, became divergent and opposing conceptions, and an ever-mounting wall arose between them, continually added to by the work of science. Yet there remained a neutral zone where reality and unreality overlap : the domain of the soul's life, which found in art its special manifestation, in religion its most general. Thus to-day "science" and "religion" are the poles of belief. In our time it is they that, as it were, mark out the boundaries between the possible and the impossible, the former by means of logical criteria based upon convincing experiences of practical life or upon mathematical speculation; the latter through the particular "articles of belief" that may be current, in which the spiritual conceptions and revelations of a divinely appointed few are brought together in a typical formula, understood and accepted by all.

The entire range of intellectual and spiritual concepts within the sphere bounded by science and religion nowadays counts as "belief" in the widest acceptance of the term; all other opinions and views are relegated to the realm of absurdity, of superstition. Alfred Lehmann defines superstition as "any generally accepted idea that either finds no justification in some definite religion or comes in conflict with the scientific conception of Nature at any given period." Such an idea usually attributes to both living and lifeless objects supernatural, magical powers, or even assumes causal relations between such objects and some accidental, antici-

pated, desired, or dreaded eventuality, though no actual connection is apparent. The same author defines *magic* as "any action that aims at influencing the supersensual or sensual world, but that cannot be reckoned either among the ritual observances of worship or among technical operations"; and *magical* as "any action through which one can, supposedly, exert a compulsory influence upon the gods, whereas actions through which one only hopes to influence the mood of the gods are rather to be regarded as religious ritual." The divine attribute of magic, of efficacy in charms and miracles, has at all times been awarded preferentially, by popular belief, to music, whose influence consequently extended not only over man and animals, but also over inanimate objects and the world of spirits. So it is quite natural that music has played an important rôle in superstition; and this not alone because it is the only one among the arts that, with evasion of the conceptual universe, can exert its influence directly, but also, and chiefly, because man at an early period became aware of its extramundane nature and sublime character. On all the other arts man impressed his arbitrary stamp in the guise of man-made laws; but music carried its own laws, and it cost no little time and trouble to apprehend them.

Two kinds of magic are differentiated, the white and the black, according as a good man or spirit employs it for good purposes, or an evil one misuses it for evil ends. Both kinds, but more especially the former, are held to be attributes of music.

In order to trace the multifold magical potentialities with which popular superstition has endowed music, we need merely glance at the characteristic myths, legends and fairytales of the leading peoples. For what was originally "belief" with a people still clinging to primitive conceptions, gradually degenerated, in the course of cultural development, into "superstition," which found sure and enduring refuge in these creations of folk-fantasy. So that these creations represent, as it were, imperishable monuments that have stood through centuries, nay, millenia, in honor of superstition; built stone on stone by folk-poesy which—characteristic and strong and not seldom with astounding psychological intuition—tells of those mystical times when Man was one with Nature, living a child's life with no thought for the morrow, his mind as yet unclouded by the speculative urge; when music—then the speech of divinity, now merely man-made art—was still revered as a mediatrix between him and his gods, and when, thanks to its magical powers, miracles were still of everyday occurrence.

Before passing on to the subject proper of our theme, let us turn for a moment to the religious rituals of primitive peoples, which may be regarded as a sort of preliminary phase in the creation of myths, legends and fairytales; even if these rituals are less of a magical than of a religious nature, and do not "exert a compulsory influence over the gods," but rather seek "to influence the mood of the gods." In these ceremonies there is first manifested the phantasy of primitive human communities before they have arrived at the relative independence necessary for the nurture of folk-poesy. Such rites, usually intended to objectify a prayer to the gods for fruitfulness (whether in harvest or family), are almost always accompanied by music, for chief among the virtues attributed to this art was its power to influence the mood of the gods. This music was naturally of a most elementary order and usually served in ceremonial dances. In subsequent developments, however, the dance itself also served as a magic panacea for diseases, and as such attained so great a significance that it was recorded by many primitive tribes in their peculiar picture-writing, in order that not only the details but the whole of its miraculous powers should be transmitted undiminished to posterity. It is true that the dance, when used in such rites, was chiefly practised by the professional magicians, the medicine-men or witch-doctors. From the reports of travellers we glean the following:—The dance is a formal stageplay acted by the medicine-man beside the sickbed in the presence of an awe-stricken crowd of onlookers. Thumping on a small drum or clattering with a rattle, he moves about in a circle, pretending to hold mystical converse with the gods, draws the disease from the patient's body, drives out evil spirits. And when he shakes his magical rattle, or strikes his little tambourine, the auditors fancy that heaven and earth are hearkening to his voice and that the universe bows down before him. Or it is related of an Australian shaman, that after varied incantatory gesticulations he began to play a certain rhythm on his drum, and then danced about, now faster, now slower, whereupon he sank into a cataleptic state from which, however, he soon awakened to beat his magic drum again; after this he announced his readiness to answer any questions put by the audience, his replies being couched in vaguest oracular style.—From the above descriptions it may be gathered that the musical instruments used in such dance-incantations are mostly rhythmical (percussives), and also that they are objects of veneration as symbols of miraculous magic power. The drum is most often employed, for example (according to Curt Sachs) in the

Malayan archipelago, where it serves as a priestly instrument; or in southern India, and with some African negro tribes, where it is used to exorcise devils and demons; or in Borneo, where it introduces the marriage ceremonies (here the bridal pair are seated on a drum, with their faces toward the east). Imitations of the musical instruments employed in religious rites are not infrequently worn as amulets to ward off magic spells, protecting the wearer from the machinations of evil spirits.

When we turn from primitive peoples to the early civilizations, the relation between music and superstition immediately takes on a wholly different aspect; it loses its coarsely material character, and assumes more ideal, poetical and, in part, even ethical features; more especially in the myths, the tales handed down from prehistoric times, which are generally woven around the figure of some god or godlike human being.

Thus the early Egyptians ascribed the origin of music to Isis, and that of the lyre to their god Thot (the Egyptian Hermes), who is said to have struck with his foot the empty shell of a turtle cast up by the overflow of the Nile, and, attracted by the clear resonance of the taut, dried sinews, to have fitted a carapace with strings on which he began to play. To the Egyptians Plato ascribes songs in which resided the power to ennoble mankind, and which could therefore have come only from the gods or godlike men.

The Abyssinians ascribed the origin of music to a saint who, sitting beneath a tree, observed how a worm seven times vainly attempted to reach the treetop, seeing in this creature's striving a symbol of his own vain endeavor during seven years to gain true understanding. Whereupon he swallowed the worm; and of a sudden the holy spirit, in the form of a dove, swept down upon him from heaven and revealed to him the nature of music.

While the Jews made very frequent use of music, and also attributed high suggestive power to it, as is shown in numerous biblical passages, they esteemed it chiefly as a moral factor. Only in the destructive effect of the trumpets of Jericho do we find anything like a magical employment of it.

All the oftener, on the other hand, do we meet with superstitious notions concerning music among the Arabs. Their favorite instrument, the lute—also known in Europe from about the twelfth century—they endowed with many magical potentialities, for the most part healing virtues. To them the lute was a symbol of Nature, as with the Greeks the lyre was symbolical of the cosmos: its four strings corresponded to the four elements.

Thus the first string, the highest and clearest, symbolized Fire; the second, light in tone, Air; the third, cold, Water; the fourth, dark-toned, Earth. The elements, in turn, being related to the human temperaments, the tones of the first (fire-) string were recommended to the phlegmatic for their healing qualities, those of the second (air-) string to the melancholic, those of the third (water-) string to the choleric, and those of the fourth (earth-) string to the temperamentally sanguine. Among the legends entwined with the name of Khosru-Parviz, husband of the renowned Shirin, we also find tales of marvellously gifted singers "whose voices excelled in sweetness the song of the nightingale." The strains of the singer Barbud, particularly, no one could resist. Of Khosru it is said, besides, that when he became low-spirited after being banished by his father, his grandfather Nushirvan appeared to him in a dream and promised to send him, to replace his two favorite harpers whose nails were worn down to the quick, two others whose art surpassed anything elsewhere known. The Arabian popular belief in the unlimited power of music over the souls of men and animals was later, in the eleventh century, gathered into a scientific system by two Arabian scholars, Ibnol Heisem and Avicenna.

The superstitious conceptions of the early Greeks concerning the power of music have a beautiful poetic symbolism. In the legend of Orpheus—who with his singing could lure men, animals, trees, and lifeless stones, halt the shattered rocks of the Symplegades, and even move the god of the nether regions to release his dead Eurydice—they most significantly embodied the power of music over the living, the lifeless, and death itself. Again, in the legend of Amphion, who with his lyre compelled the stones to come forward and range themselves into the walls of Thebes, they illustrate another aspect of music, its urge away from chaotic confusion to orderly creation. Similar to the Orpheus myth is that of the godlike singer Arion, who, when the sailors cast him into the sea that they might gain possession of his treasures, by the strains of his lyre attracted a dolphin, which bore him on its back unharmed to the shore. Of Pythagoras, too, it is related that he could bring forth wonder-working music wherewith he healed wounds and cured fevers and divers ailments. To the Greeks the dance symbolized the movement of the stars in the skies. Everywhere in nature, more especially in the mountains and on the seacoast, they heard in fancy the tones of a mysterious music of the spheres. The origin of the flute, at first for them an instrument of mourning, they ascribed to Pallas Athene, who,

when Perseus struck off Medusa's head, imitated on a reed the doleful hissing of the snakes. The Spartans regarded Terpander as the inventor of music. His singing was said to have moved them to tears and to have reconciled bitter opponents. His songs were therefore glorified as sacred melodies, which were always played, for example, before engaging in battle, in order to turn the tide in favor of the Spartans. Some decades later, the then celebrated musician Thaletas is said to have stopped the spread of the plague by his playing.

The myths of India likewise lay stress on the divine origin of music. Sarasvati, the spouse of Brahma, was the legendary donor to man of the Hindoo national instrument, the *vina*, which thereafter was zealously played by Nareda, the god of music. One day, the story goes, Nareda bent musingly over his instrument, when a sudden gust of wind swept the strings, drawing from them wondrous tones which he straightway seized upon and further developed. Maheda-Krishna let five scales or modes (*ragas*)¹ spring forth from his five heads, and a sixth from the head of his wife, Parbuti. To these the entire living and lifeless world is subjected. Certain melodies might not be sounded, on peril of death by fire. In the reign of King Akbar it is said that the singer Naik-Gobaul, though standing in the middle of the Djumna river, was consumed by the sacred fire when, by order of the king, he sang one of the mystic ragas. Another singer of the same king, Mia-Tu-Sine, could with his songs cause the sun to disappear and, on request, instantly plunge the king's palace into darkness. At the time of Krishna there were, we are told, some 16,000 ragas; for just so many *gopi* (Hindoo nymphs) were contending for the love of the god, who was wandering about the earth in the guise of a shepherd, and each sought to allure him with her own peculiar melody.

The Chinese attributed no fewer miraculous potentialities to music than the Hindoos, and the themes of their myths and legends show a multitude of variations on this subject. Among the legends of Liü-Tzi we find many. Thus the master Wen was able to control the winds by his zither-playing; he could charm the harvest from the fields, fruits from the trees; could make the waters freeze in summer and thaw in winter, and compel the sun's rays to give out more heat or less. Similar effects were produced by Gu-Ba with the music of his strings; birds gathered

¹In a forthcoming issue of THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY, Mr. Robindra Lal Roy explains that the *raga* is an æsthetic structure based on types of continuous tone-combination which he describes.—Ed.

over his head, and fishes leapt from the water. Tzon-Jen, in turn, needed only to breathe on his flute to mitigate the chill climate of his fatherland and secure plenteous harvests from the fields. The maid Wo and the youth Yung-Men were able by their singing to deprive their listeners of all will-power—a gift utilized by Yung-Men to render the enemy army impotent.

Let us turn our attention to fairy-lore. Legends in most cases have their roots in some actual happening; suitably embellished by popular phantasy and not infrequently rewritten, in the course of time they wholly lose sight of the original incident, and thus invested with the glamour of the miraculous, finally acquire their legendary character. The same is probably true of many myths. The fairy-tale, on the contrary, is—with the exception of artistic inventions—a product of free popular fancy, engendered for the most part during the infancy of the race, and therefore, by virtue of its naïve and, in a certain sense, highly valuable moral character, is very well suited to be an admirable influence during our years of childhood. In the fairy-tale the desires of a people are to some extent realized, wherefore it may be considered an especially faithful mirror of that people's ways of thinking, its aspirations and appetites, and, above all, its superstitions. In the fairy-tale, music plays a rôle similar to that which it plays in the legend.

The fiddler of Grimm's fairy-tales, who lures wolves, foxes, and hares by his playing, is in his way a German counterpart of the Greek Orpheus. In another of these tales we find the counterpart of the trumpets of Jericho in a horn whose tones could overthrow villages, towns, and even the walls of fortresses. In the Buddhist tale "Sussondi" we are told of a singer, Sagga by name, who promises the sailors of a ship musical entertainment in payment for his passage. But no sooner does he begin to play on his vina, than the fishes are thrown into a turmoil of excitement, and a dolphin leaps so high that he falls on the deck and smashes the ship. Sagga, a Hindoo Arion, manages, it is true, to save himself. In the well-known French tale "Huon de Bordeaux," Oberon's enchanted horn plays an important part. Four fairies have wrought it on an island in the sea, each endowing it with a special gift: the first, that whoever hears it, and were he nigh unto death, shall instantly be made whole; the second, that his hunger and thirst shall straightway be satisfied; the third, that whoever hears its tones must then and there begin to sing, however grievous his cares; the fourth, that at its call Oberon will anywhere and always come to the rescue. In a tale of like origin, "Cleomades

and the Wooden Horse," two princes, suitors of two beautiful princesses, seek to win the favor of the royal father by gifts, unique and fascinating, of their own devising : the one, a hen with three chicks, that can give such wondrous melodies that all who hear them are spellbound; the other, a man made of gold, holding in his hand a trumpet that always sounds when treason or any wrongful deed is preparing nearby. In two Livonian tales, harp-playing brings victory to the good prince. In the one, "How the Cat Killed the Foxes," a cat holds the centre of the stage. She goes off on a mouse-hunt, leaving the cock alone in the house. In spite of her warnings, he lets the fox come in, who at once seizes him and carries him off to his den. To set him free, the cat now hastens into the town, where she buys a sword and a harp. Then taking her stand before the fox's den, she begins to play so ravishingly that the fox, lured by the sweet tones, looks out of his hole, whereupon the cat chops off his head with the sword. His brood share his fate, and so the beloved cock regains his freedom. In the other tale, "The Old Hag Comes," a harp-player, a bear, and the Devil go into partnership, build a house, and brew beer which they fill into a keg; but in a short time the keg runs dry, and this happens day after day. So they agree to take turns watching it. The bear has scarce begun his watch, when a frightful old hag appears and sets upon him so cruelly with an axe that he barely escapes. The Devil has no better luck. But the harp-player, when his turn comes, at once begins to play on his instrument. The sound casts a spell on the old hag; the axe falls from her grasp, the musician snatches it up and puts an end to her. After which, of course, he also rids himself of the bear and the Devil.

To good men and for good purposes music willingly lends her magical aid, as in the Buddhist tale "Guttilla the Musician." To Guttilla, whose heart and hands overflow with music, wherefore his mastery of the vina is unparalleled, comes Musila, who craves to become his pupil. Guttilla speedily discovers that it is only vain ambition, not at all heartfelt aspiration, that has drawn Musila to him, and accedes to his request sorely against his will. When Musila's term of training is ended, he thinks himself the equal of the master, and proposes to meet him in open competition. Guttilla hesitates, for he begins to feel old and weak, and fears a defeat that would shame him past all bearing. But Sakka, god of the gods, now appears to him, and promises to assist him because of his virtuous deeds. So Guttilla does indeed win the contest, after which he is invited by Sakka into the stronghold of the gods, to charm them all with his playing. Musila, however, is done to

death by the multitude in their rage over his presumption. (This contest bears some resemblance to the mythical trial of skill between Apollo and Marsyas, whereby the latter is flayed by the former in punishment for his impudent challenge.)—The nordic tale of "The King's Hares" tells of three brothers, Peter, Paul and Esben, who make up their minds to live a life of pleasure without too much hard work. When the eldest brother hears that the King is looking for a keeper for his hares, he at once starts off for the court. Just before he gets there he comes across an old woman who is vainly struggling to free her nose from a cleft in a tree wherein it is caught. Instead of helping her, he makes fun of her, and goes his way. The King immediately takes him into service, but on condition, under pain of death, that he lose not a single one of the hares. Peter naturally cannot fulfill the contract, and has to pay the penalty. The second brother, Paul, meets a similar fate. Esben, on the other hand, frees the old woman (a witch) from her painful predicament, and in her gratitude she presents him with an enchanted pipe which, when blown from the one end, scatters to the four winds whatsoever its possessor desires so to scatter, and, when blown from the other end, gathers it all together again. Esben, who like his brothers is taken into the King's service as Keeper of the Hares, is thus enabled to keep his charges in order, and thereby in the end to win the King's daughter to wife.—Another nordic tale, "The Youth Who Would Woo the Daughter of the Mother in the Corner," is the story of a young fellow who found delight only in singing, dancing, and music-making. When he reached the years of courtship, his mother advised him to take to wife the wealthy daughter of the Mother in the Corner, for then he could indulge all his life in his favorite pursuits. The plan suited him and he set out at once to realize it. On the way he fell into a ditch, and when he found his feet again he caught sight of a rat, who told him that she knew he had come to sue for her hand, but that he must wait a while in patience. Although he shuddered at sight of the rat, his heart was so filled with music, and therefore so good, that he would not hurt her feelings by gainsaying her, and so made no reply. By his silence he dissolved the spell that had bewitched her, and she, a princess, resumed her rightful shape, became his wife, and endowed him with fabulous treasures.

To exemplify the healing power of music, a Tyrolese fairy-tale will serve. A blind king is advised that he can regain his eyesight only by hearing the song of the phoenix. Thereupon his three sons set out, one after the other, on a search for the fabled bird.

Only the youngest son, however, succeeds in the quest with the aid of a wolf in whom is embodied the soul of a man to whom the king's son had shown kindness, and who now guides the youth to the desired goal. In the sequel the promised cure is effected.— Similar properties, together with command over death, are ascribed in the French tale, "The Man of Iron," to a fiddle which a young man buys of a beggar for a large sum, after the latter has enthusiastically sung the praises of this magical instrument, whose potentialities, however, not everyone may master. But the youth now succeeds in recalling the king's fallen soldiers to life, and is rewarded by wedding the princess. Also, in the Norwegian tale "A South beyond the South," the tones of a violin bring back the dead to life. A peasant finds his wheatfield trampled down night after night. Before long, his son discovers the cause of this despoilment. Three doves alight at eventide on the field, throw off their feathery garb, and, in the guise of three lovely maidens, dance merrily around in the wheat. They have been bewitched by trolls (nordic demon-dwarfs), who keep watch over them in the daytime. The peasant's son promises to release them. By a trick he obtains possession of a miraculous staff and an enchanted fiddle; with the former he slays the trolls, and with the latter awakens to life the maidens, who meanwhile had been killed by the trolls.

In the Russian Gypsy-tale of "The Creation of the Fiddle" the supernatural origin of music is beautifully and poetically told. A penniless youth has fallen in love with the entrancingly lovely daughter of a king, and is thrown into prison by the enraged father when he ventures to sue for her hand; for the king will allow her to wed only some man who has done a deed that has never been done before. Of this he thinks the poor youth quite incapable. But now there appears to the youth in his dungeon the fairy queen Matuya, who gives him a small wooden box and a stick, and bids him pluck hairs from her head and stretch them over the box and the stick. When he has done so the fairy makes plain to him that he now holds in his hands a fiddle with which he can, at will, make people merry or sad. She takes the box and at first laughs into it, and then begins to weep, letting her tears fall into it. And now, when the youth exhibits his work before him, the king is so enraptured that he straightway embraces him as his son-in-law.

A similar conception lies at the root of the Indian tale, "The First Pashuiba Palm." Many years ago there came from out the great Home of Waters (the East), the dwelling-place of the Sun, a

little boy named Milomaki. So wonderfully could he sing that many came in haste from near and far to listen to him. But those who heard him presently died. So it came to pass that their kinsmen seized the youth, whom they thought a baneful demon, and burned him. Yet he never ceased to sing until his soul was fled. And out of his ashes there sprang up a tree that grew larger and larger; this was the first Pashiuba palm. From its wood were carved flutes that repeated the wondrous melodies which the youth had sung. Even to this day the menfolk play on them at harvest-time in honor of Milomaki, now revered as their god of husbandry. But the women and little children must not catch sight of the flutes, for then they would die. (In Milomaki we recognize a personification of the sun, one of the highest among the Indian gods, whose divinity is manifested in music.) In other Indian tales the rattle plays a similar rôle to that of this flute, being supposed to possess the power of decoying the wild swine. According to an Indian tale, "The Festival of the Animals," the singing of the deer-god Araputha-Tupana changed the earlier human form of the animals into their present shapes. His songs must not be imitated, otherwise all those who hear them will die. In the Norwegian tale of "The Jew's-Harp Player" we are told that the hero of the story, wearied after long searching for a lost ox, takes refuge in a hut where he meets with two Huldre maidens (nordic elves). He plays for them to dance, but all at once they vanish. He would fain lure at least one of them to return, for to her he has already lost his heart. Suddenly he bethinks him of the so-called "Blue Tune," a strain that some musical adept in his neighborhood once caught from the tribes of the underworld. He plays it; the lovely maid appears and, under the spell of the charmed strain, willingly lets herself be beguiled into following him to his native village as his wife.—Of Horand in the Hegelingen legend it is related that he learned his captivating melody from a watersprite. The amazing artistry of the world-renowned Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, was ascribed to his alliance with the powers of the nether world, and Paganini's demonic mastery to a pact with the Devil.

Having seen the beneficent effects of music, its white magic, let us now turn to its other aspect, black magic, the mischievous, pernicious influence that superstition has also attributed to it. This finds comprehensive expression in a Livonian fairytale, "Adventure of a King's Son." A youthful prince, while on a sea voyage, is lured to an island by mysterious magical harmonies. Hardly has he stepped on shore, when they cease sounding, but

if he leaves the land, they at once begin again. They seem to gush forth from behind a high wall of which he suddenly becomes aware. He lets one of his men climb the wall; this man, on reaching the top, joyously claps his hands and springs down on the other side; a second follows him; a third, however, is bound with a rope and drawn back aboard the ship in time. But he is unable to tell what he has seen, for his ecstasy at the sight has bereft him of speech. And now the king's son and his crew try vainly day after day to escape the spell of that mysterious music and sail homeward, and it is only through a miracle that the enchantment is finally cast off.—In the Hindoo tale, "The Son of the Matron," mention is made of a grand temple wherein hangs a miraculous bell, the ringing of which causes diverse other musical instruments to sound without being touched. Now, when certain birds called *bhaeranda*, peopling the temple mountain by tens of millions, hear the music of all these instruments, they fly aloft in fright and by the turmoil of their countless wings arouse the elements to uproar.

Frequently the symbol of musical black magic assumes feminine shape, as in the Loreley, in the Sirens (the enticement of whose songs could be resisted by Ulysses and his companions only by stopping their ears with wax), in the fascinating nymphs and nixies (glorified by Goethe in his ballad "Der Fischer"), in the singing and dancing forest elves (a theme also adapted by Goethe in his "Erlkönig"), in the alluring fairies of the nordic Oluf legend, who on the wedding-day alienate the bridegroom from the bride and win him by their wiles. In the Irish tale of "The King's Son and the Sweet Songbird," it is a bewilderingly and irresistibly beautiful woman who takes the form of the bird. In the Islandic version of "Cinderella"—"The Lost Golden Slipper"—a kingly widower sends forth ambassadors to seek him a bride. They are attracted by the marvellous harp-playing of a woman, and become so infatuated that they take her back to the king, but she turns out to be a wicked wretch who is plotting to make away with her stepdaughter, and finally is herself brought to book. In all these personifications we may really see a dual symbolization: on one hand the evil aspect of music, its demonic, sense-exciting effect in certain situations, as personified by woman, and on the other the infatuating diablerie of feminine nature expressed in the artful seduction of music.

When the black art of music is imparted to persons of the male sex, they are usually of a more or less devilish disposition, or may even be used by the Evil One for his own purposes. A medieval legend relates that King Eric of Denmark was so frenzied

by the playing of a wandering minstrel that he had those who were nearest and dearest to him put to death. He could be healed of his delusion only by the influence of other magic strains of a benign order. We are familiar with the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, who, because he was ill-paid for his work as a rat-catcher, tested his weird art on the children and led them to their doom. Variants of this figure, differing in subject but not in sense, are met with in the fairy-tales of various peoples. Thus in one of Grimm's tales we are told of a hind who, with his flute-playing, compels a Jew to dance in a thornbush till he fairly goes crazy. When, in punishment for the deed, he is about to be executed, the hind begs as a last favor to be allowed to play on his flute; whereby he makes all those around him, people, headsmen and judges, dance furiously, until they promise to spare his life. In like vein is the French tale of "The Three Gifts," the story of a boy who is free to choose three gifts, and for one takes a clarinet whose tones cause all who hear them to be seized by an irresistible desire to dance. He tries it first on the parson, who thereupon accuses him of practising black magic, for which he is condemned to die; but, like the piper in the foregoing tale, he induces the king to let him go free. Again, the hero of the Russian tale "Ivan Ashpuffer" is able to produce similar effects by playing on a small pipe. In another Russian tale, "The Devil's Flute," the instrument helps a swineherd to become the son-in-law of the Tsar. In this case, too, it brings him to the foot of the gallows, because he compelled the senators who were envious of his good fortune to dance in a hawthorn thicket till exhausted; but he gets out of the scrape in the usual way. And there is an Irish tale, "Diarmid Donn," in which a sorceress needs only to play on her flute to make her hearers fall into deep slumber.

In popular superstition, however, music is also considered a means for warding off the Devil or evil spirits or for expelling them, helping to strengthen the principle of good and to destroy that of evil. Curt Sachs tells us that in India, upon the death of a member of the Sudra caste, it is the custom to blow two tubas tuned in different keys (one in B \flat , the other in G \sharp), to keep off the evil spirits that seek to possess themselves of the dead person's soul. In an early version of the Faust legend music is praised as a defense against the Devil. In a Russian tale, "The Three Brothers," the eldest brother kills the youngest, and on the spot where they have buried him there springs up a superb reed, out of which a landowner, who sees it in passing, fashions a wonderful flute that forthwith begins of its own accord to play and to sing

of the eldest brother who slew the youngest. The landowner gives it to the father of the murdered youth, who in turn presents it to his son, the murderer, who is thus exposed and delivered over to the punishment he deserves. A similar story is told in a nordic legend of a harp constructed of the bones and hair of a murdered maiden, whose murderess dies on hearing the harp played. In the middle ages, so the story goes, a sudden epidemic of dance-fever (known in Germany as St. Vitus' dance, in Italy as the tarantella), whose victims were supposed to be possessed of evil demons, was successfully combatted by means of musical airs suited to each particular case.

We shall now attempt a summary of the foregoing observations—which are, of course, by no means exhaustive—on the relation between music and superstition. The strange growths put forth by superstition in connection with music, and which characteristically crop out in the fanciful folk-lore of all tribes and nationalities, create a sort of nimbus or gloriole which shines transfiguring upon the art while, in a sense, it only deepens the mystery of music's fathomless and fluid nature. The unquestioned power of music, as a medium of ethical purification of the human soul, which is not to be denied even by the skeptical, is extended by superstition over all created nature, while its purely ethical power as limited to the spirit of man is fantastically amplified into a sort of omnipotence, though at the same time crudely materialized. But just because music is full of so many enigmas which man cannot explain, superstition has been able to influence it so greatly, and will always, like a faithful page, dog the footsteps of the queen of the arts. And the mystic rejuvenating power of music will always inspire superstition to new fabulous inventions, or new varieties of the old, which superstition will reverently lay at the feet of that sphinx, music, as tokens of man's undying, wondering admiration.

(Translated by Theodore Baker)

DANCE AND SONG IN TWO PYRENEAN VALLEYS

By VIOLET ALFORD

I

A WEDDING IN THE VAL D'OSSAU

THE Béarnais countryman is too pious to marry during Lent, too busy to marry in the summer. So April and May make the only pretty ring time in the mountains of Henri IV. We are made aware of the impending ceremony by the appearance of an ox cart solemnly progressing down the street. All ox carts are solemn, but there is something arresting in the solemnity of this one. The man in charge is in his best clothes and so are his oxen. They wear clean, gaily fringed cloth, their bells ring sonorously. The cart behind them is piled so high that its contents nearly reach the gray slate roofs of the old Béarnais houses. Piled on the tower of goods we see a beautiful new mattress, a plump *duvet*, bed-hangings slung out on sticks. There is a stove, a wardrobe, a clock, there are water pots of black wood bound with shining brass. There are Béarnais baskets set out to display their contents. Our gaze fixes itself on stockings, handknitted gaiters (the Pyrenean *chausses*), handwoven chemises, immensely full petticoats. Nothing is hid from the public view. Indeed the object of the slow procession is to display the richness of the bridal trousseau. Finally our eyes reach a demure damsel seated aloft on the cart as on a captain's bridge, rolling with the roll of the oxen, and clinging firmly to a large framed looking-glass.

Is this the bride? Not at all. This young woman wears her trademark in the shape of a few needles stuck in the front of her bodice. She is the dressmaker who has manufactured the trousseau, who thus surveys her handiwork, and to whom is confided the mirror, the breaking of which would bring bad luck to the new home. The bride's father marches alongside bearing the distaff with its hank of wool and a pair of new sabots, the toes curling unbelievably.

The next day we must be out bright and early to see what is going to happen. We wonder why the guests do not arrive, why nobody goes to church. The village is wrapped in a mountain



The Bride and her Father-in-law Dance the Branle
(From a drawing by Violet Alford)



quiet, there is not a soul in the narrow, gray street. Presently a group of young men, *bérets* rakishly over one ear, saunters to the door of the bride's house. It flies open to meet them, and we see quantities of people within sitting silently round the table. The guests are already there and have been eating steadily this hour or more. The young men, who have been sent by the bridegroom, stand just inside declaiming rhymed verses in honour of the bride. Often they improvise well and aptly, but as a rule they do not sing.

Now the guests pour out, men in the wide Béarnais *béret*, shepherds wearing the embroidered pocket full of salt for their sheep. This is strapped round the waist and makes a little "bustle" behind, and partly explains the secret of those stately Biblical processions we see of shepherds followed by docile sheep. The old men appear almost as they appeared in the days of Nousté Henric, who himself wore *béret* and *chausses*. The black velvet waistcoat, the scarlet sash and white *chausses*, the buckled shoes, the spreading watch chain, added to the eagle eye and the curving Béarnais nose, make up a magnificent figure. Of which, alack, there are but one or two, the younger men preferring a cheap suit from Pau. The bride's skirt measures many yards round, and underneath it are four or five petticoats. Her bodice is outlined with silver braid, her shawl is gay with flowers, and glory of glories, her *capulet* is as scarlet as a poppy and envelops her round, rosy face. Her black plait hangs down behind and is tied with a silver tassel. She probably wears patent leather shoes, so look no further. Worse still, she may discard her rich red *capulet* and come out in cheap white satin. Older women wear black *capulets*, beneath which their long hair hangs oddly. Here and there is a mourning *mante* from the middle ages, such as a sister of charity wears to-day, which is simply a legacy from the women of the fourteenth century.

At the church gate they all run the gauntlet of the *Sègue*—a man's sash stretched across the gateway and only to be crossed after payment. This little bridetrap is engineered by the folk who are not invited to the feast. The procession back from church is, however, the great moment. Out come the *Tambourinaires* shrilling forth a *Passe-carrère* from their three-holed pipes, marking the step on their stringed drums. All fall in behind the newly married couple and to the *place* they march. There dancing begins under the eyes of the whole village, and the old people shine, for it is they who know the best steps, they who dance with an elegant courtesy unknown to the fox-trotters of to-day. The Branlou Bach opens the programme—the low *branle*, very stately,

all singing the words as they move. It was once a long tune, now the musicians have forgotten all but the first part.

Branlou Bach

Collected at Laruns, Val d'Ossau, by Violet Alford



Immediately follow other *branles*, lighter, quicker, but to foreign ears much the same. Indeed they are the same, only differentiated by tempo and tune. The men relations dance with the bride, the women relations with the bridegroom. The *branle* seems to have been brought to the French court just as English country dances were brought to Whitehall. It remained in fashion from Valois days to Versailles nights, when Louis XIV loved to lead the single file of gorgeous, if uproarious, dancers. But no. The uproariousness came later, when Lully, sitting on a kitchen table, played a *branle* for a swinging line of underlings. The expression "*mener le branle*" has passed into the French language, so that the first couple to open a ball with a fox-trot still leads the *branle*.

Two Branles

Les Abricots

Collected at Laruns, Val d'Ossau, by Violet Alford



This tune is used as a Morris dance by the Balladins in the Valleys of Bigorre.



This is the "Danse du Verre" of the famous Basque Hobby Horse, also the "Bear" tune for the Spring Bear of Vallespir.

Formerly, the *branle* was a single-file dance, a *farandole*, the leader holding his partner by the hand, facing the file and dancing backwards. But, perhaps because only he had freedom to show off his steps and because the other men wished to show off theirs, the single file, about fifty years ago, split up into couples. Each man holding his partner's hand dances backwards in front of her, pulling her after him. The women content themselves with discreet little polka steps, but the men leap, indulge in *pas battus*, *entrechats* if they are clever enough, and after turning the woman under their arms (which movement now takes the place of the arch of the old *farandole*-like *branle*) end with the curious caper of the Guipúzcoan dances, in which the feet are thrown up alternately to face-level. But a Béarnais mountain man cannot manage this difficult feat with the grace of a supple young Basque.

Many of the *branle* tunes are sung, many are instrumental. The folk musician of the Val d'Ossau still plays his three-holed pipe, his box-like elongated wooden stringed drum.¹ These old instruments are found still in use in the neighbouring valley far up beyond Luz, and to the west in the Basque country of La Soule. There are but very few now. When the old generation has gone, who will use the antique things, who will teach the young men their steps? Now follows a *Saut*, one man beginning alone, another joining and yet another, till eight or ten are working away, each alone, following more or less the same circular track. Loose, individual, uninspiring is this dancing. Very different is the celebrated *Saut Basque* across the frontier of Béarn, down there on the other side of the Pic d'Anie, and how the agile, graceful Basque despises the efforts of his heavier neighbour! Yet one *Saut* danced by that same agile Basque bears the name of a Béarnais village, Moneindarrak.

¹Called "ttun-ttun" in the Basque province of La Soule and the "*tambour de Gascogne*" elsewhere.

Off go the guests to a second feast, but not yet may the bridegroom sit next his bride. Etiquette demands two separate feasts, so the company divides and those who sat this morning in the house of the bride sit there again. In the house of the bridegroom the second company sits down, and there they remain in their respective houses for long hours eating and singing, singing and eating—and drinking tumblers of red wine. A traditional verse resembling our Wassail songs must be sung.

Allégresse, allégresse, allégresse!
 God keep the table and the Master of this house,
 Likewise the cooks and the Master of this house,
 They make us the best of cheer,
 We wish them a happy year.

Mysterious preparations are going on meanwhile, and when at long, long last a move is made, here is the *Présent* ready in its magnificence. A flat basket, all gay with ribbons, is set out with a leg of mutton, cheeses, bottles of wine, loaves of bread. Into one of the loaves is stuck a bough with nine twigs, and on every twig an apple is hung. Nine is one of the mystic numbers, and hundreds of Béarnais and Gascon rounds are danced to a *Chanson de Neuf*. The one now sung in the ancient dialect says

Au nouste poumè
 que y abe nau poumos,
 Oh, que le bent la ha tremblé
 la poumeto, la poumeto. . .

The next verse announces eight apples, the next seven, and so on. At each verse an apple is cut off and handed to one of the party—a fertility charm, surely. Bride and *Présent* go together to their new home, the company following. She enters with difficulty. A traditional dialogue has to be spoken before the door will open, other girls are first substituted for her. It is only when the right girl is pushed forward that the door opens wide. She is thrust roughly inside at last, the bridegroom acknowledges her as the chosen woman [to what far off tribal custom does this point?] and down they all sit for the third time, and set to work upon the *Présent*. Tradition must surely have gone astray here. Was not this gift in kind intended for the new household?

Now at last the married couple may sit side by side. A few more *Sauts* are danced round the table by the men, a few more rounds sung. Almost singing games these, such as *Yan Petit*, everyone tapping the floor with finger, toe, elbow, nose. This is reminiscent of a Danish dance from the Himmerland, which in its

turn links with the famous *Sept Sauts* ("Die Sieben Sprünge") of Germany and the Pays Basque. The tune of *Yan Petit* is also that of the Contredanse, *La Trompeuse*, known from Ariège to the Atlantic.

Yan Petit. A Singing Game.

Collected by Violet Alford in Béarn

Yan Pe - tit que dan - so, Dap lou dit que

dan - so, Yan Pe - tit que dan - so, Dap lou dit que

dan - so, Dap lou dit, dit, dit, A - tan dan - so Yan Pe - tit.

pè, - pè, - pè, dap lou dit, dit, dit, A tan dan - so Yan Pe - tit.

Camb, Camb, Camb, dap lou pè, - pè, - pè, dap lou dit, dit, -

dit, A tan dan - so Yan Pe - tit.

and so on, adding a bar each time until the game finishes with the head tapping the floor.

When night fills the valley and the great bulk of the Pic du Midi is clean blotted out, when everyone has danced, sung, eaten and drunk to repletion, the long-suffering young people are ceremoniously led to that beautiful new bed we saw parading through the streets. After an interval of quiet, a short respite, at about three o'clock in the morning, the "Roste" begins. And what that is we cannot say, for our informant only just brought himself to mention its existence, adding "C'est un peu libre, nous n'en parlerons plus." And we never have.

Rossignolet que canto. A Love Song

Collected near the Lande de Pau by Violet Alford

II

A SPRING FÊTE IN THE LAVEDAN VALLEY

But one of the musicians has already left the noisy company and gone out into the night. He has slung his long drum and his *sabots* on his back, his naked feet and his fuddled head take him

in zigzags across the road. Nevertheless he makes good progress upwards, for to-morrow another engagement awaits him in the neighbouring valley. Every minute is precious, and the dawn sees him at the inn on the Col d'Aubisque. An hour's sleep and a lift in a donkey-cart help him down the never-ending loops to the valley floor.

A gray village, presided over by its great square church tower, sits on a little green hill above the plain of Lavedan. In the inn, awaiting the beat of the drum, a company is gathered. Very different these from the wedding company of yesterday, no scarlet *capulets* gleam, no rich velvet breeches, no silver tassels here. These young men wear dark trousers of the handwoven *bure*. Baldricks worked in red cross-stitch are worn over the breast of the white shirt; a large red bow in place of a tie, a wide red waist sash and embroidered white *espadrilles* make up their ceremonial dress. A beribboned *béret* falls over the right eye. They might be a troupe of Kaskarots from the neighbouring Basque country, or just as easily a side of Morris men from far away Oxfordshire, and their own musician waiting with them draws out of his accordeon the very tune to which men of Headington once danced their Rigs o'Marlow.

When the newcomer's drum burrs, wine glasses are hastily emptied, the three-holed pipe shrills forth the *Passe-carrère*, the door opens on to the *place* and the Balladins of St. Savin are "out."

They go in single file, twelve of them, the thirteenth in front ceaselessly swirling his little flag. The sandalled feet silently leap and advance and turn, and leap again. These quiet feet are agile but the bodies above them sway and bend; the dancing is individual rather than that of a disciplined team, the general effect and style inferior to that of a troupe of Basque Kaskarots. Nevertheless they make a delightful ribbon of red, white and black, a ribbon which winds about the *place*, then suddenly broadens into a circle in front of the small yet stately house of the Mayor. The tune changes, the processional gives way to a stationary dance composed of two concentric circles, the flagman in the centre. The outer circle works clockwise, the inner circle counterclockwise to the well-known tune known as *L'Aulhado*, the *rondeau d'Auch*. But to the Balladins this tune is *Le Soleil* and their young musician plays it with an attractive change of key never reproduced in any printed version of the old air. The sparse and poor collections of Pyrenean tunes dating from the eighties and compiled by local priests, schoolmasters or organists show those "improvements" we have learned to leave unmade. Even the



M

A Balladin in Ritual Dress
(From a drawing by Violet Alford)



newest, a large modern collection covering an immense tract of country and a large range of valuable matter, is always being "caught out." Use an air from one of these collections as an opening—"Can you tell me what this air is? Do they dance to this in your valley?"—and the answer called forth eight times out of ten will be: "Ce n'est pas ça," followed by a version more archaic often, modal often, and with those irregularities beloved of and natural to the folk -singer and -musician, which have been so obligingly smoothed away in the too polite printed version. Making allowance for a number of variants, it still is not permissible to present as a 6-8 measure a Spanish Basque *zortziko*, the very nature of which makes it a 5-8 measure, nor to write

deliberately 

the plain opening of the Cascabaillade dance of Vallespir; nor to add as a refrain to the Catalan "Ventura, ventura," an air repudiated by the very Catalans who sing "Ventura"—"Ce n'est pas ça"; nor, to touch another order of mishandling, to label "Sardanes et Bals" a division which does not contain a single Sardana tune; nor again, to call an Indian file dance a "menuet populaire." After which refreshing but dangerous digression the writer, living in expectation of a similar castigation by the next comer, returns to the Balladins of Bigorre.

Le Rondeau d'Auch, l'Aulhado, known
to the Balladins as "Le Soleil"


Collected at St. Savin by S. B. and V. A.



The Balladins are now dancing over four waist sashes stretched out some three feet above the ground and crossed to form the spokes of a wheel. The eight men, each holding one end of a sash, walk round clockwise, then dance on the spot, throwing their legs alternately over the sash they hold. It is quick work, for the feet must touch the ground on each 1st and 4th beat, and the effect is dazzling, the legs circling rapidly over the coloured spokes, red, blue, black.

The tune is an interesting example of a theatre dance-air transformed into a folk-air. The wheel dance is called "La Cinto" (*cintura*), but the tune is known as "La Gabote," *la gavotte*, from

Provence to the Bay of Biscay, and is nothing more nor less than the middle portion of the younger Vestris' famous gavotte. The Balladins variant is jerky and poorer than that found in many another valley of the Pyrenees, but occasionally the correct

opening  is pumped out even by an accordeon.

How did a stage gavotte of the 18th century get into the hands of Pyrenean folk musicians? Or, how did Vestris, of Italian birth and brought up in Paris, come to incorporate a Pyrenean air into his stage gavotte? Which is the question?

Collected by V. A. and S. B. at St. Savin



The Processional shrills out again, the single file gets under way, the Balladins are off a-ballading and their tune is "La Ballade." The step hesitates while the point of the free foot touches the heel of the stepping foot. On every fourth beat comes the flutter of a *petit battement en devant* (these Pyrenean steps are best described in ballet terms), while at the end of each phrase the even numbers turn to face the man behind. All step on the spot, crossing the feet alternately and bringing them back with a circular movement above the ground. The even numbers turn again and the file goes hesitating forward, led by the flagman and his little swaying flag.

La Ballade

Collected by V. A. and S. B. at St. Savin



Another item in the repertoire is a lively dance in circular form like "Le Soleil." The free foot is first flung into the crook of the other knee, then brought to the ground in a backstep. But the interest lies chiefly in the tune. It is that widespread little air,

which for all its simplicity covers a large track of European ground. We know it in Ireland, England, the Basque country both French and Spanish, in Provence and Languedoc, and it is said to belong equally to the Slav countries.

La Matelotte

Collected by V. A. and S. B. at St. Savin



We easily recognise here the Irish "Rakes of Mallow," which has become the Oxfordshire Morris tune "Rig o' Marlow." In the Basque lands it is known as "Tri-li-li eta Tra-la-la," also as the tune for a "Suite" following a *Saut Basque*; in Provence as "La Matelotte" to which a bastard hornpipe is danced. Here we find it again in Bigorre and again used as a Morris dance.

Amongst the tunes of the Balladins, their Processional, "La Ballade," is the most interesting for it takes us into a new dance and dance-tune area.

3-8 measure, except for the *fandango* (which is nothing but a Basque version of the Spanish *jota*), is unknown in the western Pyrenees. Here in Bigorre we encounter it for the first time. A little higher up the valley the Balladins of Esquièze, the Balladins who "dansent Bayard," use just such another 3-8 measure for their Processional; while up still another thousand feet those of Gèdre, who used to accompany the Springtime bear, carried little sticks, and, in the intervals of a single-file Processional, formed couples for eight bars of stick-tapping. But their tune was the well-known "Pantalon" air. Further along the range we again lose the triple measure, reverting to the 2-4 time of the Ariège *bourrées*.

The Balladins are the Morris men of Bigorre. They all go out in the Spring, those of Gèdre already mentioned, on Jeudi Gras, the Thursday before Lent; those of Esquièze once in seven years, those of Saxos high on the mountain, and of St. Pée-de-Bigorre right down on the plain, at Carnival time. The St. Savin team should appear on the Sundays in Carnival and at the Marché des Jeunes at Argèlès on the Tuesday before Mardi Gras. They should make their lustrations all about the village, and take the luck of the Springtime to each outlying farm like good Morris men. But indeed they hardly ever do so. They prefer a visit by electric train to Caunterets during the season, where they collect

ten-franc notes from the visitors, to a toilsome round up mountain paths and a few *sous* from their own people. Their musician, he of the accordeon, a young man but sharing the tastes of "les vieux," laments this unwillingness to follow tradition.

"Ce jazz!" he cries, wringing his hands and his accordeon, which emits an answering wail of sympathy.

He comes of a family of dancers, one of those priestly families whose members perform the local rites, as in Abbots Bromley, where the leader of the Horn Dance boasts three hundred years of family service; in Overton, where the Chief of the Mummers, "King" George himself, claims four hundred years of ancestral priesthood, and adds with proud emotion "It do near make me cry"; or far north in Burghead, where the hereditary King of the Clavie annually lights his ritual fire. This young musician shows his little brother the steps, jogs his baby to the air of "La Ballade," bicycles to work whistling "Les Abricots," while his mother-in-law brings out the dancing dress of her old husband, cross-stitch baldrick, red sash and all. And in the old gray Maison Paoudebat, set in its green apple orchard, the whole family sings the dialect songs and finds no time for the rollicking triplets of "Constantinople" which mark the height of fashion in the plain of Lavedan.

Le Pantalon, used by the Balladins of Gèdre when they used to accompany the Spring Bear.

Collected by S. B. at Gèdre

Procession forward

Stick tapping + + + +

S last time

Jump

MUSICAL LIFE IN PARIS (1817-1848)

A Chapter from the Memoirs of Sophie Augustine Leo

PART I

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE]

Sophie Augustine (Dellevie) Leo, the writer of the anonymous "Erinnerungen aus Paris" (Berlin, 1851), from which the following chapter is taken, was born in Hamburg, September 14, 1795. From 1810 to 1816 she spent the greater part of her time in Hanover with an elder sister, Mme. Valentin, accompanying her to Paris in 1817. Her marriage to the German banker August Leo followed. Both Leo and his brother-in-law, Valentin, were prominent patrons of music and the fine arts, and of literature; among their regular guests were many of the most distinguished artists then living in Paris. Moscheles' wife, Charlotte Embden, was a niece of Sophie Leo, and Moscheles' memoirs yield a lively account of his visit to Paris with his wife, shortly after their marriage in 1825. "Moscheles' old friends, the Valentins and the Leos, now aunts and uncles of the bride, received the young couple most cordially. 'We are treated like children of the family, yes, like spoiled children,'" Moscheles writes on March 14th. The young wife, who, save for Berlin, had seen nothing of the world, was taken by her aunts to one theatre after another. In rapid succession all the sights of the capital were visited, Moscheles playing the experienced cicerone. Aunt Valentin's teacher, the painter Gerard, was a frequent visitor at her house, as were also Benjamin Constant, Alexander Humboldt, Meyerbeer [the composer] and his brother Michael [Michael Beer, the writer], Hummel, Felix Mendelssohn and his father (who were stopping in Paris at the time), and other interesting persons. "It is at the Leos' that I most enjoy playing," Moscheles writes in 1839, "and it was there that I first met Chopin." Over a long period of years, August Leo acted as banker and business agent for Chopin. There are frequent references to Leo in Chopin's letters, and it was to Leo that Chopin dedicated the A-flat Polonaise, Op. 53. In a letter to his lieutenant, Fontana, Chopin writes in 1839, "Engage a valet for me. Kiss Mme. Leo. (To you, the first commission will be the more agreeable; if you attend to it for me I shall excuse you from the second)." Charles Hallé also writes of the Leos and their "réunions intimes," at which Chopin, who avoided large parties, was often present. In 1848, at the time of the revolution, the Leos returned to Germany; in 1852, however, they were again in France, making their home at Versailles.

Sophie Leo wrote under the pseudonyms Leontine Romainville and Emil Deschamps; a second volume of her memoirs appeared in 1853.

* * *

DURING the first years of my Paris residence I felt a certain dissatisfaction with the state of the plastic arts; as to the condition of music this was even more true. Here my expectations had been greater, since, during the second half of the

last century and at the beginning of the present one, French operatic music had been of the very highest order. With regret I saw compositions of merit set aside, mediocre works in general favor. Music in the higher sense, as a force affecting our feelings and developing them by means of characteristic melodies, elaborated in accordance with the rules and requirements of harmony, seemed to be something quite foreign to the younger generation of that day. Such works of the good old masters of the last century as had not been forgotten were heard and appreciated by the older part of the public alone, whereas everything but the very latest productions, freshly trimmed with gaudy theatrical tinsel, was dismissed once and for all by the younger people with the catchwords "perruque" or "Pont-Neuf"¹ as unworthy of attention, save from the wearers of wigs.

It was obviously a taste for variety that prevailed, and modern works, even indifferent ones, were preferred to the best of the more substantial older compositions. There can be no question of opinion here, for the mere recital of a series of names will serve to characterize a period, rich in unusual operatic music, which was almost at an end and which in its own unique way was never to be supplanted.

Monsigny, born as early as 1729, did not die until 1817, a few months before my arrival in Paris. I could scarcely bring myself to believe that a man who, in his active youth, had known Rameau, who had been a contemporary of Philidor, who, during the ascendancy of the divine Gluck, had already been regarded as one of the older generation, a man whom I reckoned among the actual founders of French opera, had been so recently among us. Can there be anyone who, having once heard *Le déserteur*, *La belle Arsène* or *Rose et Colas*, does not recall the experience with pleasure? Can there be anyone who would not welcome an opportunity to hear more such genuine, naïve works as these?

But when I spoke in this vein to the younger and youngest of my associates I met with no response. As a result of the unusual lease of life granted to Monsigny his pieces had held their place in the repertoire, and those who had known him, or who had at least seen his operas years before, retained their memories of him; Philidor, on the other hand, although born at about the same time as Monsigny, had been almost entirely forgotten in consequence of his earlier death. Inasmuch as Rousseau's *Le*

¹At the time when the Pont-Neuf was still lined with two rows of market booths that cut off the view to either side, it served as a gathering place for jugglers and wandering musicians. Hence the expression "Pont-Neuf," with which all truly antiquated music is still depreciatingly characterized. (*Author's note.*)

devin du village was still being given at the Opéra, I cherished the hope of hearing Philidor's *Tom Jones* as well, but, as I have said, all interest in this direction was at an end, and my hopes were vain.

Perhaps Philidor's extraordinary memory and his mastery at chess, retained until his death (he lived to be sixty-nine), were responsible for the undeserved indifference with which he was regarded as a composer. It was clear that the remarkable assurance of his chess playing had made greater contributions to his reputation than had his music, though the latter was also valued highly by some of those with whom I spoke. The mere mention of his name was enough to occasion an immediate reference to his astonishing faculty of playing, blindfolded, three simultaneous chess matches, yet never failing to win.

Dalayrac, Della Maria, and Grétry, who together had made contributions of prime importance to the improvement of French operatic style, shared the fate of the composers already mentioned. Their most beautiful works were seldom or badly performed. I saw the *Caravane du Caire*, the very weakest of Grétry's compositions, at the Opéra; here, however, a general deterioration had set in. The building was old and dirty, badly lighted, and inconveniently situated in the narrow rue de Richelieu. The artists, as old and as worn out as the theatre itself, sang (or rather shrieked) without voices, without teeth, deeply wrinkled, and shabbily costumed. The most celebrated members of the company, Mme. Branchu, Lays, the elder Nourrit, and one or two others, were tolerated out of sympathy and charity, for it was known that these former favorites were to be pensioned within a few years. When I first saw them, during the winter of 1817-18, they were truly pitiable. The entire institution, with everything pertaining to it, was decaying in the strictest sense of the word. In view of the expected reorganization the very existence of the old house had been forgotten, and it could only attract an audience now and again with ballets. Mozart, who had been so highly honored in Paris, in person during his childhood, later in his immortal works, was completely ignored at the time of which I am now speaking.

Gluck's masterpieces alone held their place in the repertoire of the rue de Richelieu, but it was plain that this contributed more to the convenience of the company than to the pleasure of the public, which apparently found no enjoyment in them. I remember that at these performances the audience might easily have been counted. It consisted almost entirely of those to whom these works brought pleasant memories of departed youth. The

aged Gossec, taking his place in the first row of the balcony, was to be seen regularly at the Gluck operas. His genius was highly regarded by connoisseurs, and the old man, then eighty-five, had the happiness of seeing the deserted opera house visited by the chief figures of the musical world when, on rare occasions, Racine's *Athalie*, with his choruses, was presented by the company from the Théâtre-Français.¹

I still look on those performances as among the most impressive that I have ever been privileged to attend. Similarly, I regard myself as having been particularly fortunate in hearing Gossec's "O salutaris hostia" in the Royal Chapel, for even at that time Gossec was being displaced everywhere by the younger and far inferior Le Sueur.

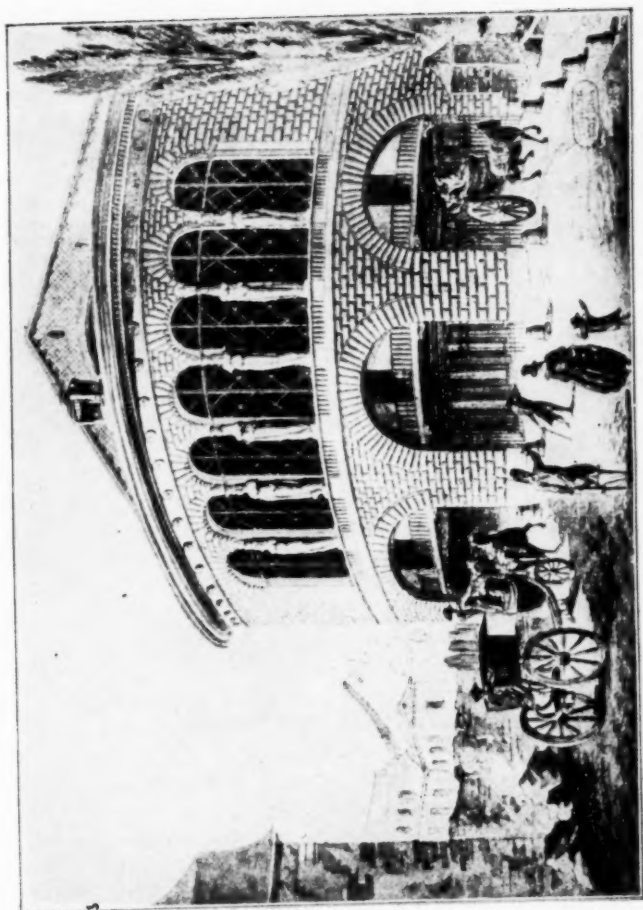
That Gossec, whose hold on life at eighty-five caused astonishment in 1818, should manage to live on to the age of ninety-six, and, only a few evenings before his death, sit in his usual place at the Opéra seemed to me, as had Monsigny's long life, almost incredible.

Immeasurable as was my admiration for Gluck, I was really distressed by the affected style in which those divine works, *Armida*, *Alceste*, and the two *Iphigenias*, were offered us by the old company; one enjoyed and suffered at the same moment. All was distortion, and an awkward mob of extras in soiled classic costume, their heads wreathed in roses, their faces rough and bearded, their reddened fists protruding from their coarsely-woven sleeves, made an impression as distasteful as it was ridiculous. Remembering then that it was the beautiful sorceress *Armida* who, seeking the downfall of her noble knight, had brought all this about, one turned to Mme. Branchu, who must surely have been at least sixty, and every illusion was lost.

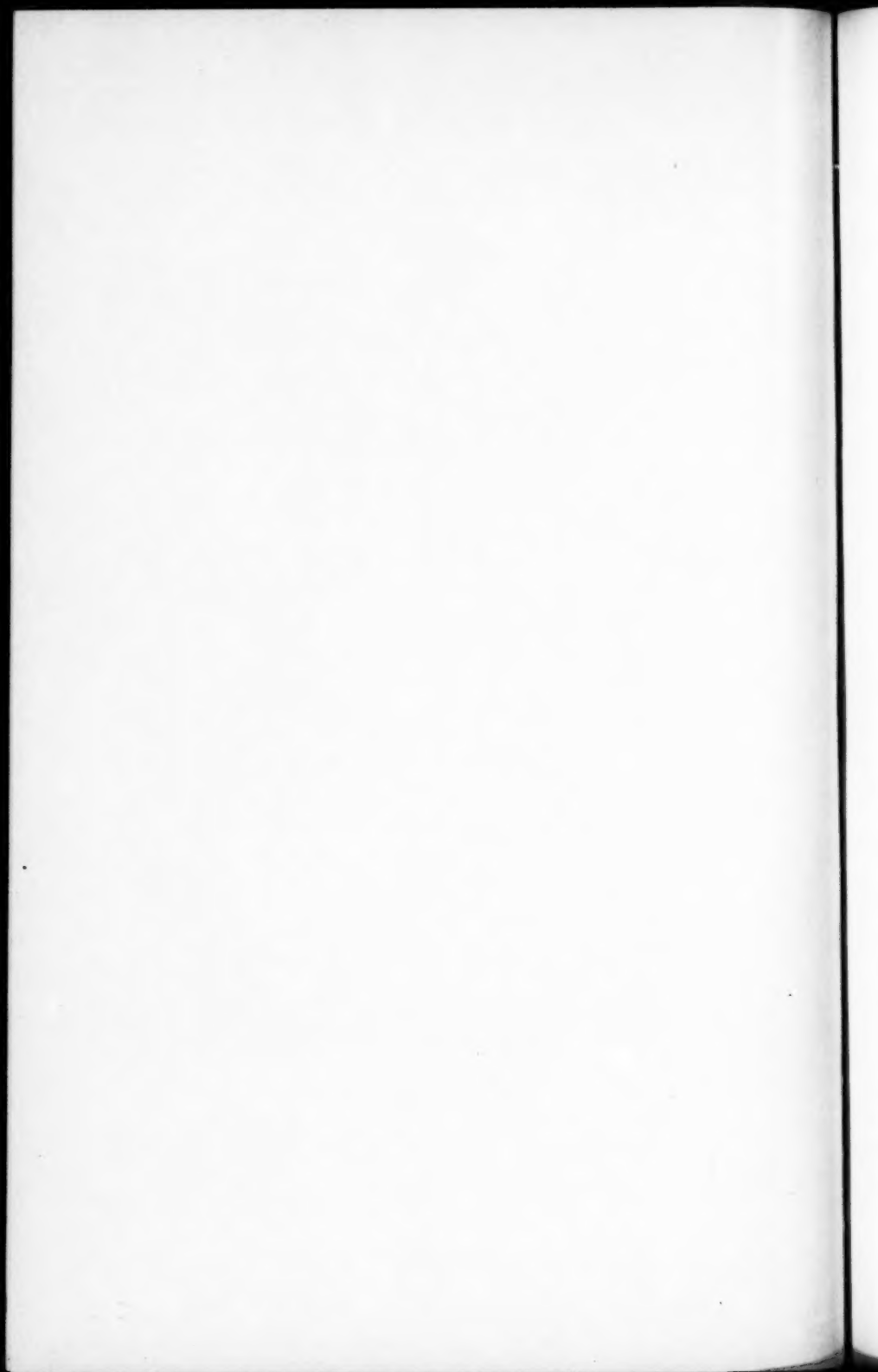
Faults of this sort did not prevent my attending the Gluck operas zealously, and despite the imperfections of the performance my admiration grew; to the younger Parisian public, however, this taste was, as I have said, entirely foreign.

Spontini's accomplishments in the field of French grand opera had long given satisfaction, and *La vestale* and *Cortez*, performed with all the brilliance characteristic of the day, had found fitting

¹In a letter to his family, dated April 19, 1847, Chopin writes, "*Athalie* is to be given with the choruses by Gossec, a French composer well-known and esteemed at the close of the last century. Nowadays, the magnificent chorus from Haydn's *Creation* is usually performed at the end of the *Athalie* choruses (which are rather tiresome). Gossec, hearing this one day (it was about thirty-five years ago, and he was then a very old man), remarked naïvely, 'Je n'ai aucun souvenir d'avoir écrit cela.' He was readily believed." (Translator's note).



L'Opéra-Comique (Salle Feydeau)



appreciation. Sharing, however, in the general distress of the failing opera house, they suffered too in that, some ten years after their composition, they were regarded as antiquated. Since the cabal is always to be reckoned with in Paris (particularly in the theatrical world) this distinguished master was almost completely set aside after his departure from Paris, though he alone had been responsible for the last revival of the Opéra's former splendor, a revival that long remained without a parallel.

Paër, also a resident of Paris, and like Spontini and Cherubini, an Italian, had laid the foundations of his reputation in France as had the two composers last mentioned. All three masters belonged to the inner circle of our group, then only in the course of formation; Spontini, however, was to be lost to us for a number of years as a result of the call that he received from Berlin.

According to our own estimate Cherubini and Spontini stood well above Paër, but at that time, before Rossini had appeared on the horizon, before his Italian and would-be Italian imitators had so overrun the world as they did later, before it had been foreseen how great a force for superficiality in music the modern Italian school was to be, at that time, I repeat, one could not deny Paër a certain talent in *Sergino*, in *Achille*, and in *Camilla*. On the other hand one was obliged to admit that he had not shared the elegance of his amiable countrymen, of his contemporaries, Fioravanti, Cimarosa, and Paesiello, and of those whose music he had heard in his youth. Paër was uninspired, and it is, after all, on inspiration that everything in music depends. In our company he was the soul of animation, wit, and kindliness, but he had completely disappeared from the repertoire of the Opéra. I still look on him as the pioneer, preparing the road to the northern audience for the later Italian composers of the tedious *genre semisérieux*, but leading, at the same time, into unfortunate byways. On one occasion I heard his *Camilla* at the second opera house, the "Comic opera," with which qualification its gruesome theme was in altogether too glaring contrast. The degeneracy of that wretched passion, jealousy, was here so crudely depicted, so distressing was the spectacle of the virtuous and slandered wife, starving, through the design of her deluded husband, in a subterranean vault, that the offense to the sight and to the feelings outweighed the pleasure the music might have provided. Unluckily for Paër, this grotesque subject, if I may so express myself, had occasioned a most favorable display of his musical talents, so that one was at once attracted and repelled.

This second French opera house, now known only as the Opéra-Comique, was then as often referred to as the Feydeau, from the quarter in which it was situated. It quite properly found more favor with the public than the Opéra, though here too the careers of several well-known artists were at an end, or nearly so.

The celebrated and genuinely idolized singer Elleviou had retired shortly before my arrival. He was still spoken of rapturously. As is usual in such cases, older people who had been young with him and who then had received their first impressions felt that his later imitators fell far short of equalling their model, and, despite his masterly acting and pleasing voice, the excellent Martin seemed to them a poor substitute. In the same way the fascinating and graceful Gavaudan sought to supplant Saint-Aubin; the latter, however, had been a remarkable singer, whereas Gavaudan had little voice, if, indeed, she had any at all. Though the management of this second theatre was liberal and though a number of young artists did creditable work, the company, as well as its composers, were here too on the decline.

Dalayrac, Della Maria, and Grétry, of whom I have already spoken, had written principally for this stage. Dalayrac, though perhaps less original than Monsigny and Grétry, had shared their respect for true purity of style and of melody; indeed, naturalness of style, without a seeking for effect, had distinguished the entire period in France as in Italy. *Les deux petits savoyards*, *Adolphe et Clara*, *Gulistan*, and *Raoul, sire de Créqui* are the most notable examples of Dalayrac's graceful talent.

Della Maria, to whom only twenty-eight years of life were accorded (born in 1778, he died in 1806), is best remembered for his brilliant compositions *Le prisonnier* and *Il maestro di cappella*, in both of which melodramas one recognizes the hand of a worthy pupil of Paesiello. The operatic style of the last century was essentially an ingenious blend of French and Italian elements.

To the French school must also be assigned the Belgian Grétry, born in 1741, the year of Paesiello's birth, and living to almost the same age as that master. Since the death of both men preceded my arrival in Paris by only a few years, Grétry dying in 1813, Paesiello in 1816, the temptation to compare their undeniably somewhat similar styles is natural enough. Among Grétry's works *Le tableau parlant* seemed immature, even to the most favorably disposed; *Zémire et Azore* and *Richard Cœur-de-lion*, on the other hand, were distinguished by the utmost brilliance and by the most conscientious workmanship. One

classed them with Paesiello's *Re Teodoro* and *Nina, o La pazza per amore* (later revived at the Théâtre-Italien).

In 1818, *i. e.*, shortly after my arrival in Paris, connoisseurs were shocked by the deaths of Isouard and Méhul, particularly by that of the latter. To the fortunate Méhul the Italian style had been quite as congenial as the French, and it was remembered with what success he had contrived to convince the sceptical Napoleon, then First Consul, of the truth of this. To that hero music was merely an amusing pastime; indeed, one would scarcely have looked to a world conqueror for real artistic discrimination, for which serious study is as essential a requirement as inborn receptivity. At the time, however, the report went that Napoleon expected to be taken seriously as a critic. Méhul's operas *Une folie* and *Les deux aveugles* had won the Consul's special approval, qualified, however, by the regret that the French composer's French style would prevent his ever rivalling the Italians, however often he might distinguish himself. Criticism of this sort goaded Méhul to defend himself with such weapons as were at his disposal. He secured the libretto *L'irato*, and, having completed his score, was favored by the custom that then obtained in Paris (of late it has been less strictly adhered to), according to which the names of author and composer were never announced until after the première. His secret was known only to the most intimate of his friends. The public, Napoleon included, had taken it for granted that *L'irato* was an Italian work in translation. The First Consul's exclusive preoccupation with Italian music was shared by his family and by the General Staff that had returned from Italy with him, and Méhul had the satisfaction of observing throughout the performance that Napoleon and the entire company in the consular box, in the very best of spirits, were constantly nodding their approval, Napoleon repeatedly expressing the opinion, as Méhul learned later, that the Italian music was animated by a totally different spirit than the French and that Méhul would never be able to offer such a composition.

Tumultuous applause, and the demand, "The composer! The composer's name!" succeeded the fall of the curtain. Méhul's name was announced. The Consul could say nothing, for Méhul had merely followed the established custom¹.

I am unable to say whether it was Méhul's hope of winning Napoleon's favor or whether it was the opera's extremely amusing

¹Compare J.-G. Prod'homme's article *Napoleon, music and musicians*, in THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY for October 1921, where Napoleon is quoted as having said to Méhul, "See that you deceive me often this way!"

libretto that determined the style, Italian in the best sense, that predominates in this work. It will stand comparison with Cimarosa's *Matrimonio segreto*, and Cimarosa would perhaps have been incapable of composing a *Stratonice* or a *Joseph*.

These masterpieces were then being seldom and indifferently given at the Opéra-Comique, where their reception was similar to that accorded the works of Gluck at the Opéra. The younger generation, failing to appreciate them fully, strained after novelty and change, and showed its inability to recognize excellence when its presentation was not externally brilliant.

With Méhul, Isouard had come into prominence. Born and brought up in Malta, son of the Chamberlain to the Grand Master, Isouard's distinguished birth and early plans for a career had retarded the full development of his talent, as has, on occasion, the lack of means among those of more humble station. Fate, and the complete change wrought in his circumstances by the downfall of the Knights of Malta, sent him to Italy and furthered his ambitions.

Since at first he had had reason to introduce himself as Nicolo, applause encouraging him to add, subsequently, the qualification "da Malta," and since it was not until many years later that he began signing his full name, Nicolo Isouard da Malta, the public was often confused, asking whether all three names could refer to a single person. His opera *Jeannot et Colin*, more especially his *Rendezvous bourgeois*, sparkled with life and animation; I doubt whether a more amusing subject than the latter is to be found. Though I can no longer remember enough of the detail to retell the story, I know that the merriment of the spectators was endless and that the music had caught the spirit of the text. *L'intrigue aux fenêtres* followed, then *Cendrillon* and *Joconde*, and Isouard died, aged forty-one, at the height of his development and in the ever increasing favor of his public.

Both Cherubini and Berton had won fitting success with their compositions for the Opéra-Comique, though among Berton's works only *Aline, reine de Golconde* had made a lasting impression. Boieldieu and Cherubini, more popular as a rule, had also made settings of this subject, but Berton's *Aline* was always the favorite. Like Cherubini, Berton was still living, decried by ignorant youngsters as hopelessly out-of-date; the younger school, however, will scarcely have offered anything to compare with Cherubini's *Lodoiska*, *Faniska*, and *Les deux journées*, or, above all, with the beautiful Requiem¹ in which, as Sarti's pupil, he proved his famil-

¹Lately revived in excellent performances by The Friends of Music in New York, and unanimously acclaimed by the critics as a noble work of great merit.—(Translator's Note.)

ilarity with the religious style of the older Italian masters, even though the eternally incomparable genius of a Mozart may not make its presence felt.

It was the likeable and unusually handsome Boieldieu, a popular and affectionately regarded figure, who was Méhul's real rival in esprit and who was almost the only one who, despite the ties that bound him to the previous generation in point of age, training, and style, retained undisturbed the favor of the public of the day. *Ma tante Aurore*, *Le calife de Bagdad*, *La dot de Suzette*, *Jean de Paris*, *Le nouveau seigneur du village*, and *La fête du village voisin* had all been more or less set aside by the time I reached Paris, but *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *La dame blanche*, of which I saw the premières, were welcomed with enthusiasm by his countless admirers of both sexes. Though he had made some slight concessions to the prevailing fashion by introducing ballad stanzas and peasant rondos, the two operas last mentioned were, on the whole, in the best tradition, containing, as they did, an abundance of delightful ideas, carefully and competently elaborated. I am almost tempted to say that with Boieldieu the succession of the chosen was, for a considerable period, at an end.

Since it had now become a question of attracting the public with novelty rather than with solid merit, management and friends combined to focus attention on the young Hérold, Méhul's pupil. With the appearance of *La clochette* and *Le premier venu* Hérold was put forward as a second Méhul, but despite the not unfavorable reception of these productions the claims made for him had been by no means substantiated in 1833, the year of his early death. For a time greater things were expected of Catel, but he too proved a disappointment and was subsequently forgotten.

French and Italian influences having been almost equally balanced during the period under discussion, it is difficult to determine from which quarter the first impulse came, unless one have reason to derive it from the Italians Lully and Piccini. Paesello's already mentioned *Re Teodoro* and *Nina, o La pazza per amore*, together with Fioravanti's *Virtuosi ambulanti* and *Cantatrici villane*, had been virtually adopted by the French light-opera stage; Sacchini's *Oedipe à Colonne*, on the other hand, though at first received with enthusiasm, had failed to justify the pretensions to Gluck's heroic manner entertained by its composer. Sacchini, a pupil of Durante (who in his turn had come from Scarlatti's school), was thoroughly grounded, as Gluck had been, in the theory of the serious, dignified church-style and sought to

employ it to depict heroic pathos in Oedipus, an opera based, as those of Gluck had been, on the fabulous history or historic fable of antiquity; the pathos, however, remained purely intellectual, and evidence of genuine inspiration, the presence of which is as impossible to counterfeit as it is to conceal, will be found wanting in this work.

The most dismal spectacle of all was presented by the Italian opera house in Paris. During the season of 1817-18 everything in which a connoisseur takes satisfaction was lacking here, precisely where one expected most. Mme. Catalani had taken over the management, but music appeared to be the least of her concerns. I should be unable to name a single one of the Italian operas that were offered, the work of a host of obscure composers with unfamiliar names ending in *ini* or *itta*. Neither their subjects nor their music nor their performers could arouse the slightest interest. Among the company that she had assembled Mme. Catalani alone could be called a singer; she made a practice, however, of singing below a *mezza voce* during an entire evening, acting wretchedly into the bargain, until, near the close of the performance, she enchanted everyone with a bravura aria, generally one written especially for her. Yet two or three of these show pieces were thought sufficient for a whole season, and no one of them filled more than ten minutes of the three dull hours through which these miserable operas dragged. And as a rule these arias or bravura pieces were quite ordinary productions. As an exception I am obliged to mention Rode's variations. To be sure, the genre was distasteful to cultivated musicians, for instruments ought to imitate and accompany the voice, not vice versa, yet the extraordinary dexterity with which Catalani performed these baroque tricks took her audience by storm. The worst of it was that this sort of thing later became the fashion.

Rode, another of those gracious guests who had allied themselves with our group, delighted all who heard him with his magnificent violin-playing, but since his home was in Bordeaux we seldom had this pleasure.

Though at the time of my arrival all three opera houses were deteriorating, a very few years sufficed for their rehabilitation. By this I do not mean to imply that there was any improvement in the compositions that were provided for the two French theatres; it was rather that the standard of the singing, the personnel, the costumes, and the buildings themselves were improved and that the whole was given a fresher and more inviting appearance. And with the advent of Rossini the Italian opera house, ridding itself of

those little-known composers whom Catalani had favored, attained in time to an ideal perfection—but I am still speaking of 1817 and 1818.

However discouraging the condition of the opera may have been during those years, the concerts were in an even more deplorable state. The demand was for a long succession of short and varied compositions; often more than twenty pieces were played on a single program. Even the most capable artist dared not offer his unappreciative audience a quartet or quintet, much less an entire concerto with orchestral accompaniment, and in private circles where music was cultivated the display of ignorance and lack of taste was still more striking. Here there was a wailing of the romances of the most out-of-the-way composers. Blangini, Garat, and Romagnesi seemed distinguished in such company. Trios for flute, guitar, and harp, duets for bassoon and Jew's harp, and similar trash offended hearing and intelligence alike. Instruction, following the general trend of musical life, combined bad taste with incompetency.

Having accused the Parisians of a certain laziness, an indifference and lack of discrimination which had made itself felt in almost every phase of their musical life, I shall also bear witness to the energy, the enthusiasm, the progress, and the partial success of those efforts toward improvement, toward an awakening from the prevalent lethargy, that were made once the public had been aroused to a realization of the unsatisfactory state of affairs.

It was in 1817-18, or thereabouts, the Théâtre-Italien being in the deplorable condition just described, that travellers fresh from Italy brought word of Rossini's successes, and in 1820 the new management then improving and reorganizing the Italian company in Paris brought out the *Barbiere* and *Otello*. Connoisseurs familiar with the earnestness and solidity of the northern style recognized the characteristically modern superficiality of these southern works, yet the ingratiating lightness of the southern music when contrasted with the academic heaviness of the northern productions was absolutely undeniable. While realizing that Rossini had not taken his studies in thorough-bass over-seriously and that the loveliest of his melodies suffered from the inordinate burden of coloratura with which they were laden, the disinterested frankly admired Rossini, who, like a spoiled child, was to be condoned in every indiscretion.

Sternier critics were more sparing with their praises, regarding Rossini as a composer who, led astray by the natural vocal qualifications of his countrymen, was clever in employing artifice and

mannerism to conceal his lack of training. As we learned later, these critics were right in fearing that incompetent and graceless imitators, animated by vanity, straining after the applause of the moment with operas baited with runs and trills, might end by producing nothing else; that singers, first taking up this ear-flattery out of greed and lack of resistance (for the trick soon began to pay well), might end by adopting it permanently from sheer force of habit.

With few exceptions the general public gave its approval in deference to fashion and since it found that it might enjoy itself comfortably of an evening, rocking and swaying to ingratiating melodies and easily-grasped rhythms.

In 1820, however, these imitations had not yet begun to appear. With the admirable Fodor, with the incomparable Garcia, Cimarosa's delightful *Matrimonio segreto*, Zingarelli's *Romeo e Giulia* and our own Mozart, outshining all other composers, were being presented. Garcia's Don Giovanni, Fodor's Contessa (in *Figaro*) were gratifications that may be mentioned in retrospect; to describe them would be impossible. Nor, for that matter, could one do justice to Pasta's classic beauty, to her taste in matters artistic, to her characterization of solemn resignation in Zingarelli's "Ombra adorata." In this she seemed possessed by Crescentini's spirit, for I learned later that it was he who had been her teacher and had succeeded in inspiring in her that divine ardor. In the course of ten to fifteen years Pasta developed a graceful dexterity that had the fascination of perfection itself. Unfortunately it was a mortal, hence short-lived perfection; neither voice nor figure long retained its attractiveness, and after fifteen years both had been lost to her. Her figure had become too full, her voice too coarse and unreliable; she was no longer a singer. Later the appearance of Garcia's daughter, the charming and spirited Malibran, reconciled us to the loss of her almost inimitable model. She too afforded complete satisfaction; despite her lively temperament, that was sometimes a hindrance to her, and her inability to make her own the grandiose style of her predecessor, she was a beautiful and a talented woman. Her manner, which at times came dangerously near to caricature, was alleviated by her youth and charm. Her real advantage over Pasta lay in her extraordinary musicianship. An appreciation of the difference between the two singers demanded a sensitivity to the slightest nuance, a refinement allotted in the required measure to few. Even to-day Crescentini's school perseveres, though his followers, out of touch with his methods, are losing ground. The once so

beautiful Grisi had caught a little of his style; she too impressed me deeply. One evening at Gerard's, Bellini, whose premature death was so severe a disappointment, stepped to the piano and accompanied her in his "Casta diva"—since then it has been torture for me to hear this interpreted by mediocre talents. Who, having heard Lablache, Rubini, and Tamburini, can ever forget them?

(Translated by W. Oliver Strunk)

To be continued

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

THE resumption of this department, after a pause of two years, is not due to insistent demands by clamorous readers. When circumstances necessitated its temporary discontinuance, there rose—fortunately—no loud and open threats of desertion by subscribers unless these “Views and Reviews” were instantly restored. To be sure, a few kind and well-intentioned hints were dropped, letting it appear that, without this little tail-light attached to the quarterly train of brilliant thought, there was “something missing.” But these hints were just enough to confirm the belief that nothing serious, nothing indispensable was missing, and that the department had lived up to its chief purpose: of furnishing a more or less pleasant superfluity.

For once, however, an essential matter calls for discussion under this rubric. The reviewer has had to assume the editor’s responsibilities; and the moment has come when the reader must be taken into editorial confidence. What disturbs the editor’s none-too-peaceful mind is the realization that there *have* been defections from the ranks. They are not numerous, not alarming. The gaps have been more than filled by new recruits. And yet the ranks must be further strengthened if we are to march on and deploy.

It is not our intention to follow the example of a friend and British colleague of ours who was obliged to tell his readers, not long ago, that, if they wished their magazine to continue, they would have to hustle and double the number of subscribers. Although they actually did it and so saved the life of a most excellent publication, we shall not paint things in the same lurid colors. Nor do we have to. **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY** remains an uncommercial and—we hope, at least—uncompromising organ for musical and musicological topics such as its first editor, the irreplaceable O. G. Sonneck, conceived and made it. Nevertheless, it must be confessed, without shame or blushing, that **THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY** (to paraphrase Lessing) stands in need of being bought as much as it is read. Laudatory comment is most gratifying—and helpful criticism is still more appreciated. The important thing at the present time, however, is that our faithful readers should volunteer to do a little missionary work among their friends and try to gather into the fold a few more faithful. This plea is made very strongly, very earnestly.

And now let us resume the engaging task of writing about other people’s writings. If an occasional digression of our own,

quite beside the mark, should slip into the exegesis, do not take us to task too severely for our garrulity.

* * *

We choose as text for the day's lesson the last verse of the ultimate chapter in the book of matrimonial lore.

Adultery is a personal matter. Its aspects vary with the circumstances. It can be sordid, it can be heroic. In either case it is apt to be held an offense against public morals so-called. When committed by persons in the public eye, their conduct is publicly discussed and generally condemned without the knowledge of whether the supposed infraction was the consequence of a wilful disregard for common decency or of a powerless submission to a higher necessity.

In the case of Cosima Liszt, wife of Hans von Bülow, her breaking of the marriage vows and her surrender to Richard Wagner were inevitable. More than that, they constitute her supreme claim to the unique position she attained in her lifetime and furnish an absorbing interest in the story of her life, published after her recent death at the age of ninety-three. Long as may be the list of notable adulteresses, none more magnificent is to be found in history than Cosima.

In fact, up to the present she loomed a little too forbiddingly superb. Hers seemed to be too icy cold and cruel an abandonment of a good man for the sake of a great one; her casting off the weaker and preferring the stronger of the two had not the redeeming glamour of self-sacrifice. It rather smacked of designing selfishness. One could not help feeling that Cosima knew, perhaps calculated, the increase in her own reflected greatness by the step she took. To many of her contemporaries, surely, this thought must have provided a plausible motive for what, at best, was a bold defiance of convention. And they judged her accordingly.

Now Richard Count Du Moulin-Eckart, in a biography¹ of Cosima that carries us only as far as Richard's death, lifts the veil from the hidden places of the heroine's innermost being, as bared in her letters and diaries. The diaries, a rumor has it, were left by Cosima, at her death, to her daughter Mrs. Eva

¹*Cosima Wagner*, by Richard Count Du Moulin-Eckart. With an introduction by Ernest Newman. Alfred A. Knopf, 1930. 2 vols. This review is based on a shorter review of the work done by the writer for the *Saturday Review of Literature*, used by permission of the editor, Mr. Henry Seidel Canby.

Chamberlain, who entrusted these sacred and secret papers to Count Eckart for a "discreet use" in his proposed book. The result can hardly be described as anything but the contrary. It seems incredible that the finished product should have escaped the censorship of the House of Wahnfried. But this, evidently, has been the case, to the great consternation of the family. In one way the book has thereby gained; unquestionably, we learn more than we were intended to know. On the other hand, the historian Eckart is frequently and patently mixing up his facts as well as his dates; and here a little supervision by Cosima's children might have spared us much confusion. But one is inclined to forgive Count Eckart his somewhat unhistoric methods, his often rambling narrative, his tiresomely bloated style, all for the sake of those "indiscretions." In his preface he states that the material upon which he drew was placed at his disposal by Wahnfried "with an unexampled display of confidence;" that he used it "quite unreservedly;" that therefore he takes "unqualified responsibility for the whole book and all that is related in it." The meaning of these words becomes clearer when it is understood that, if "no restrictions of any sort" were imposed upon the author "from any quarter whatsoever," it is because no one apparently conceived the idea that he could be guilty of such an unexampled breach of confidence.

The temptation, of course, was too strong. Here were confessions more extraordinary and soul-searching than Rousseau's and Amiel's. Here was romance more passionate and involved than that of any other figures among the high-strung, disordered romanticists. Above all, here was an opportunity to correct a misconception, by allowing us a glimpse into the utmost depths of a woman's heart. And we behold, instead of an unscrupulous wanton, a conscience-stricken wife and mother, infinitely the greater for her frailty and wretchedness. The world has long since accepted the theory that without Cosima there might have been no "Mastersingers of Nuremberg," no termination of the "Nibelung," no "Parsifal." There would have always remained "Tristan," pinnacle of Wagner's creative work, created largely in the "asylum" offered to the homeless refugee by Otto Wesendonck, and tenderly watched by the temporary "muse," Mathilde, Otto's wife. Those are happenings dating from B.C., before Cosima. Yet Cosima, admittedly, gave Wagner his first real domestic happiness, tranquillity of surroundings, and a renewed zest for the joyful toil. She gave him all this and more, she gave him herself. But at a price.

In May, 1864, after having been rescued by King Ludwig and sumptuously installed in Munich, Wagner invited Bülow to come to him, alone at first, for all he needed at that time was a pianist of Bülow's ability to give the young King some idea of the Nibelung music. But immediately we see the amazing monster changing his plans and neatly preparing to bait his victim: "I invite you, with your wife and children and maidservant, to take up your quarters with me this summer for as long as possible—this is the result of long communing with myself. Hans, you find me in prosperity . . . my life is completely transformed! I am full of the most genuine love, the purest intentions—but my house is desolate, and now, for the first time, I feel this more painfully than ever. Good souls, now do help me over these first days. People my house! A whole storey is ready for you and your dear family. Cosima shall come with the two children." And she came.

Wagner was fifty-one (or seventeen years older than Hans von Bülow); Cosima was twenty-seven. The difference in their ages was significant. It worried Liszt, it shocked Mrs. Grundy. Unquestionably, Cosima's charm and vivid mentality acted upon Wagner with a rejuvenating force, so that eventually he appeared younger than his years. But this rejuvenescence is carried a little too far by Count Du Moulin-Eckart when, in discussing Wagner's final animosity against Liszt, he makes the astounding statement: "It must not be forgotten that Liszt was many years older than the Master." Liszt was exactly nineteen months older than Wagner, or a little more than a year and a half. That statement is in keeping with certain tendencies of the author to throw a roseate light upon the darker sides of his heroes; and sometimes he can do so only by casting shadows upon certain others. Papa Liszt gets his share of umbrageous retouching. Princess Wittgenstein, of course, appears in hues of deepest black. Of Nietzsche, branded as a thankless renegade, we are told that Wagner "had really been the first to initiate him into Schopenhauer and was in the fullest sense of the word his master." And again we find that "The Master" had "after all been his [Nietzsche's] teacher!"

It cannot be said that the author has treated his subject always with absolute impartiality. Perhaps that would have been expecting too much. But he has greatly helped us toward understanding two of the most remarkable personalities of the last century. The wealth of hitherto unpublished letters and of extracts from the diaries is almost too abundant. The high-falutin correspondence that Cosima, on Wagner's behalf and in his in-

terest, carried on with poor "Parzival," the royal dupe, is often a little sickening. Pages upon pages addressed to "the Only one" or "the Benevolent one" with circumstantial tales about "our distant Friend" or "the Dear one," make strange reading. Yet, of the effect upon the King when he found his idol but a human all-too-human, we are told too little.

Wagner's enemies in Munich stopped at nothing; they were besmirching Mme. von Bülow's name. Cosima and Richard were being dragged into political, social, and theatrical intrigues. Wagner had settled in Tribschen—we are in June 1866—and Bülow sulked in Zurich. Cosima alone ventured to make another journey into the hostile camp. Ludwig remained, throning in nebulous heights. Cosima implored the King for a "gracious letter" expressing his confidence in the Troublesome Three. If there is a possibility of such a letter being written and published, "then I will persuade my husband"—she writes—"that we should return home; how, otherwise, could we stay in a city in which we might be treated as malefactors? How could my husband carry on his work in a city where the honour of his wife has been called in question? My royal Lord, I have three children [the youngest, Isolde, born in April 1865, was Wagner's!] to whom it is my duty that I should preserve their father's honourable name unstained; for the sake of these children, that they may never cast aspersions on my love for our Friend, I beg you my most exalted friend, write the letter." It was written. It was published on the day that war was declared between Bavaria and Prussia. It made matters worse.

We are told that in the event the royal subvention had ceased, or had been forced to cease, Wagner "thought of a visit to America." If Wagner and Cosima, at that point, had sought shelter on American soil, we might have had the edifying spectacle of their being refused admittance by the Immigration Office because of "moral turpitude;" for was not the composer Scriabin, when he visited New York some twenty-five years ago with a companion not his wife, just able to pack his trunks and catch a boat the night before the authorities proposed suggesting to him the desirability of his departure from our moral shores?

The brief war over, after a complete victory for Prussia, the King wrote to Wagner: "God be praised that the independence of Bavaria can be preserved." The exalted youth believed, however, more firmly than ever that his "true and divine mission"—as he wrote to Cosima on July 21, 1866—was to remain at Wagner's side "as a true, loving friend and never leave him."

Ludwig thought of abdicating. And Cosima tried to manage a king, a genius, and a husband. She lacked neither courage nor enterprise.

The situation became more and more complicated, more and more intolerable. For another eighteen months the *dramatis personæ* drifted on toward the inevitable catastrophe. In December 1867, Ludwig began again to press for another hearing of "Tristan" in Munich, steadfastly refused by the Master. He wrote to Cosima that he had a "consuming desire" to hear this love-music, having just escaped marriage with a Princess "whom I did not love" and avowing that his aversion had been such that "if it had proved impossible to break my engagement by fair means, I was firmly resolved to put an end to my life with cyanide."

The performances of "The Mastersingers" in the summer of 1868, brilliantly conducted by Bülow, had left him unnerved. The shadow of the giant was gradually eclipsing the cooling sun of his own existence. He sought forgetfulness "at the side of Joachim Raff" [he needed converse with pygmies to find his own middle-ground] in Wiesbaden, where he "gambled and practiced pistol-shooting!"

"And now [in Count Eckart's words] Frau Cosima took a step—indeed, she was forced to take it—which was perhaps the most fateful in the whole course of this dramatic denouement. Its significance was undoubtedly more than merely symbolical, and even by Richard Wagner it was regarded as 'the end.' He proposed to her a visit to Italy, which was absolutely necessary to him after the unprecedented agitation of The Mastersingers." And Cosima again obeyed the sorcerer's summons.

The final bursting of the bomb came with a sudden bang. It took but the usual, banal, fortuitous incident to touch the fuse. "By opening a letter in the most innocent way, he [Bülow] became aware of this journey and of the full import of the Master's relations with Frau Cosima, which were known to all the world and hidden from him alone." The game of blind-man's-buff was over. King Ludwig, behind the defenses of his fairy castles, kept up his belief in the wonderful Friend until the sad truth scaled the last ramparts and would no longer be denied.

On January 8, 1869, Bülow's birthday, Cosima wrote in her diary: "I wish that he might spend it in a peaceful mood of reconciliation, though I can do nothing to contribute towards it. It was a great misunderstanding that united us in matrimony; I still feel the same for him as I did twelve years ago: great sympathy for his destiny, delight in his gifts of both mind and heart, a real

esteem for his character, together with a complete incompatibility of disposition. In the very first year of my marriage I was in such despair at our misunderstandings that I wanted to die." Nothing unusual there.

Bülow's mother had added materially to the misunderstandings. Yet, Count Eckart rightly insists that Cosima, during her marriage with Hans, never lost her "unreserved appreciation of the chivalry of her husband." Nor did she, having left him, lose sight of the wound she had inflicted. Her hands were soiled; the "damned spot" would not out. If she had no regret—was she not ruled by Fate?—she suffered remorse. The bleeding ghost of Hans stalked through the days and nights of her happiness. While Wagner was working on the third act of the opera "Siegfried," and Cosima was carrying the child Siegfried, she confided to her diary: "If death were to approach me now, I should not grieve. It seems cruel to me that I abandoned Hans. I tell myself that if I, too, feel this cruelty, then it is clear that there is a God who directs and determines my actions, that the will and choice are not my own. But I do not blame anyone who does not see this as I do, or does not share the faith I possess, the faith that is my condemnation. Gladly and lightly will I bear the abhorrence of the world. But Hans's sufferings rob me of all joy." It would be interesting to know whether the Fate theory and the sophistry of a cruel God smiting Hans and a merciful God looking after Richard were not suggested by the latter's cunning.

Eckart goes so far as to say that "it is not at all correct to assume that, in the long run, it would have been quite impossible for the Bülows to live together." But aside from the fact that living together in matrimonial misery is probably one of the most degrading things for us to endure, we must not forget that what made the wedded life of the Bülows, such as it was, definitely and completely impossible, was that person Richard Wagner. Bless his greedy soul and body! When anything became "absolutely necessary" to Wagner, there was no denying him. And that is why Hans Guido von Bülow, descendant of General Bülow von Dennewitz, hero of the war of Prussian liberation from the Napoleonic yoke, had to admit his ludicrous inability to redeem his "honour" by firing a pistol shot in the vain attempt at killing what he knew to be immortal. When was a tougher, a more hopeless job put to one of God's rare gentlemen?

On the second anniversary of the day on which Cosima had openly forsaken Bülow and permanently joined Wagner, she wrote in her diary: "I recalled yesterday how I had arrived with

my two children, trembling and scarcely able to speak another word. I had banged the door of the world behind me and parted from it forever." She left a neurasthenic nobleman and eminent artist, in order to throw in her lot with a neurotic cad and incomparable genius.

On August 19, 1870, six days before her marriage with Wagner, she writes in her diary: "Thirteen years ago today was my wedding [with Hans von Bülow], in just such rainy weather. I did not know what I was promising then; for I did not keep my promise; but I know what it was that swayed my feelings. Never shall I forget my sin, and I shall look it constantly in the face, in order to learn humility and resignation." And on August 25 when—after endless delays and after having born him three children out of wedlock—she became at last Richard's lawful wife, there is this entry: "Our marriage took place at eight o'clock. May I prove worthy to bear Richard's name. My prayers have been concentrated upon two points: Richard's well-being and my hope that I may always be able to promote it, and Hans's happiness and my hope that it may be his lot to live a cheerful life afar from me."

If the point of "guilt" must be raised at all, it is Wagner's rather than Cosima's. He was ruthless in his egoism. He took what he wanted regardless of whose it was. When Bülow, in 1862, had sold a ring presented to him by the Grand Duke of Baden in order to contribute some money to Wagner's needs, Wagner wrote to Bülow: "Whoever else still possesses any valuables that he does not care about must cheerfully sacrifice them to me—in all seriousness. As I am now, I have suddenly regained entire confidence that I shall win back and restore all the stuff splendidly and gloriously." Could anything be more splendidly and gloriously sardonic?

Count Eckart paints Cosima as having been a "pious Catholic." It is doubtful whether religious scruples weighed heavily with her. She did not share the Catholic ideas regarding divorce. In a letter of Cosima's to Baroness von Schleinitz, dating from the early part of 1883, we read: "Unless husband and wife live in and for each other, even at the price of great sacrifices, marriage is a monstrosity—a hell, in fact—nay, one of the most horrible and sordid institutions ever devised. . . . we certainly cannot be grateful enough to Luther for the possibility of putting an end to a state which is the most unworthy thing imaginable—for both parties, too—unless it is sublime in spite of all its sufferings." Among unpublished letters of Wagner's in the Library of Congress in Washington are several addressed to the lawyer who conducted Cosima's

divorce proceedings. In one of these letters Wagner frankly asks whether Cosima's joining of the Protestant Church is needed in order to facilitate the divorce or only to make possible the re-marriage. The act was plainly one of convenience and had no other significance. In these same letters we catch glimpses of the infinite chivalry of Hans von Bülow, broken in spirit and health, but nobleman to the bitter end.

In 1877, Cosima wrote in her diary: "Guilt is the most terrible of evils. I accuse nothing and nobody, and I am conscious of the fearful, inexplicable guilt of my being born." She closed these reflections with the words: "When my dear Siegfried learns what I have suffered, he must not shudder. But he must know that through all my anguish I have blessed him and his father; it is only myself that I have hated and cursed—no, not even that, but I have suffered beyond expression." The daughter of Liszt and the Countess d'Agoult, she grew up convinced "that she had neither father nor mother." Yet she was god-child of Fortune. Brilliantly endowed, she moved all her life in an enchanted circle.

At Wagner's side, she was privileged to take part in the marvellous unfolding of his titanic musical conceptions. She brought forth simplicity and tenderness—witness the "Siegfried Idyll"—where bombast often marred the beauty of utterance.

She slavishly cared for a crabbed and aging crank, beset by heart attacks, made more dangerous through his fits of anger. "The state of prodigious excitation in which Wagner lived was often the reason for unbridled and apparently causeless outbreaks of his temper." A clearly psychopathic case. Wagner's animosity against his benefactor Liszt turned into jealousy. He could not abide the thought that his wife might still revere her father. He fanned the flames of distrust, and took joy in the conflagration. "When he broke out against her father with the utmost violence, her filial heart writhed in anguish, and still more so when he gave her the worst possible reports of Hans von Bülow's condition." It was left for Count Eckart to show us the glorious ogre in the rôle of a senile sadist.

After Wagner's death, her humility and resignation gave way to an increasing show of autocracy. She became Mistress of Bayreuth. She turned into a sort of Mary Baker Eddy of the Wagnerian cult, enthroned in the mother-church on the *Festspielhügel*. She lived to be a legend. In nothing is the legend seriously altered by Du Moulin-Eckart's account, except that after reading it we understand perhaps more clearly that Cosima's "guilt" became transfigured and glorified, because her glory was

but the fruit of her unspeakable misery. She drained the golden chalice to the dregs. She humbled herself before the world, and she rose to one of its highest places.

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The American publishers of Count Du Moulin-Eckart's life of Cosima Wagner have opportunely followed it with an English translation of some of Hans von Bülow's letters,¹ originally published in 1927, edited and provided with an introduction by the Count. These "Neue Briefe" had a strange fate. The originals were in the possession of Bülow's and Cosima's daughter Daniela, wife of Heinrich Thode. She had kept them, with a great many priceless objects of art and less valuable household goods, on her estate, Villa Cagnacco, at Gardone di Sopra. The war broke out. The Italians occupied Gardone. The peace of Versailles made the territory theirs. Then the ruler of Italy's destinies, in order to recompense the Hero of Fiume—for whom he is said to entertain no overpowering affection—had the bright thought of presenting Gabriele d'Annunzio with Daniela Thode's property, including everything it contained from cellar to attic.

Thus Bülow's letters became "spoils of war," and d'Annunzio showed no inclination to return them any more than the rest of Daniela Thode's belongings. She had to engage in negotiations with the chivalrous aviator-poet, who finally consented to receive Count Du Moulin-Eckart, early in 1921, as emissary of Bülow's daughter. The parley ended in the surrender of the letters. The Count promises to give the detailed story of "this memorable meeting" when he writes his memoirs.

Besides the letters from Gardone di Sopra, the present volume contains, as one of its most important sections, some of Bülow's letters to Wagner. Concerning these, the editor writes:

Alas, they are but a torso. Much interest and curiosity has been felt about them. My luck in finally obtaining this remnant of the correspondence is due to a fortunate chance. In any case it would be wrong to regard the withholding of them until now as intentional on the part of Bülow's daughter.

The letters had drifted to Riga and were only returned to me through friendly intervention. I do not think the remainder will ever be found; it is to be feared that, together with much other precious material, they were burned by Frau Cosima's own hands in the Trieb-

¹Letters of Hans von Bülow to Richard Wagner, Cosima Wagner, his daughter Daniela, Luise von Bülow, Karl Klindworth, Carl Bechstein. Edited, with an introduction, by Richard Count Du Moulin-Eckart . . . with a preface and notes by Scott Goddard . . . Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.

schen days; for this marvellous woman was possessed of a strong determination to give the world no access to anything that was absolutely her own.

Reading the last sentence, one wonders what the marvellous woman would have said of the use to which Count Du Moulin-Eckart put her diaries. And the wonder grows, when later on in his introduction to the Bülow letters the editor—who occupies, we believe, one of the chairs of history at the University of Munich—declares that “It is not for the historian to set down everything as he finds it: it behooves him to be as tactful as any other man of the world.”

Bülow’s letters may be translated; their flavour cannot be rendered. He had a habit of interjecting polyglot passages into the shortest and simplest note. His German was often telegraphic, explosive, and on occasion it could be vitriolic. He wrote excellent idiomatic French—most of his correspondence with Cosima was written in her mother tongue; he had a knowledge of English, Italian, Spanish, and all of them he knew well enough to exercise his caustic wit in some peculiarity appropriate *bons mots*.

That the translator’s task is not an easy one may be shown by one example; it is the beginning of Bülow’s famous letter to Cosima, written in Munich on June 17, 1869. (It should be remembered that Siegfried Wagner was born on June 6, 1869; Bülow was busy rehearsing “Tristan” in Munich.) The letter appears in both the Cosima Wagner biography and the Bülow volume; the first was translated by Catherine Alison Phillips, the second by Hannah Waller.

Phillips version

Dear Cosima, I thank you for taking the initiative as you have done, and I will not go out of my way to find grounds for complaining of it. I feel too unhappy, through my own fault, not to avoid everything in the way of unjust reproaches that may be wounding to you. In the unspeakably cruel separation which you feel to be your duty, I acknowledge all the faults on my side, and I will continue to lay stress on them in the most marked way in all the unavoidable explanations on the subject with my mother and your father.

Waller version

I am grateful to you, dear Cosima, for having taken the initiative and shall give you no reason to regret it. I am indeed too unhappy myself—through my own fault—not to wish to avoid wounding you by any unjust reproach whatsoever. As regards this most painful separation, which you have felt necessary, I recognize all the wrongs on my side and shall continue to lay stress on them in the inevitable discussion on the matter with my mother and your father.

The comparison might be carried further, with the German versions from which these two translations were made, and finally with the French original. What, in the dangerous process of translation, has there been left of the tone, nuance, and style of the writer's phrase?

This letter is one of the saddest ever penned. It is such a pitiful document of human misery and chivalry that one cannot read it without feeling sick at heart. "I have lost my sole support in life and in my struggle. It was your mind, your heart, your patience, indulgence, sympathy, encouragement, and advice—last and most especially, your presence, your face, and your voice—which, taken all together, constituted that support." Many husbands, deserted by their wives, may have written thus. This one, in the hour of his greatest loneliness, served "the other" faithfully to the end. "Today and tomorrow I have orchestral rehearsals of Tristan from nine till two . . . my intensive work on Tristan, that gigantic but devastating production, has literally finished me. The public performance is to take place on Sunday. I accept the responsibility; it will not be a profanation—I wrote to Wagner to that effect the other day—but it will be my last appearance at the head of the orchestra. . . . Yes, without any reproach to its mighty creator, Tristan has given me the *coup de grâce*."

The last of the letters to Cosima reprinted in this volume dates from October 1881. In July 1882, Bülow married the charming actress Marie Schanzer in Meiningen, where he had made of the court orchestra the first great virtuoso organization of the kind.

At Wagner's death, in 1883, when Cosima's grief seemed to leave in her only the wish that her own end would come, it was Bülow who sent her the laconic message: "*Sœur, il faut vivre!*"—Sister, you must live! And they will continue to live, both, so long as one note of Richard Wagner's music survives; their story will continue to absorb the mind and touch the heart, so long as the causes of human behaviour and misbehaviour remain subjects of puzzled scrutiny.

C. E.



QUARTERLY BOOK-LIST



ANDERSSON, OTTO

The bowed harp; a study in the history of early musical instruments. From the original Swedish ed., rev. by the author, the tr. ed., with additional foot-notes, by Kathleen Schlesinger. xvii, 319 p, 8°. London; W. Reeves.

ANDREWS, HERBERT C.

John Briant, bell-founder and clock-maker, 1749-1829; a biography and list of his bells and clocks. 95 p, 8°. St. Albans; W. Cartmell.

ARTHUR HENRY MANN, 16 May, 1850-19 November, 1929. 27 p. Cambridge; King's College. [Three appreciations printed for private distribution.]

BARTÓK, BÉLA

Hungarian folk-music. Tr. by M. D. Calvocoressi. London; Oxford University Press.

BEAUMONT, CYRIL W.

A history of ballet in Russia, 1613-1881. Pref. by André Levinson. 140 p, 8°. London; C. W. Beaumont.

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Voice and the vocal apparatus. 30 p, 12°. Cambridge; W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd.

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Stories from the operas. New ed. 1072 p, 12°. London; T. W. Laurie, Ltd. [Publ. at 8/6; another ed., "complete in one vol." (xvi, 1048 p, 12°), publ. at 15s.]

AN EARLY LATIN SONG-BOOK, containing select psalms and hymns and unique metrical lives of St. Francis and St. Clara and St. Anthony (from a 13th century ms. in the collection of Mr. Edward F. Smith). Ed. by E. S. Buchanon. xxvii, 154 p, 12°. New York; C. A. Swift, Inc.; London; C. F. Roworth, 1930.

ENGEL, CARL

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A complete knowledge of the essentials of pianoforte playing. Part 1. 38 p, fol. London; Pitman, Hart & Co., Ltd.

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To return to all that; an autobiography. 350 p, 8°. London; J. Cape, 1930.
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